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**‘ALL THE COMMON RULES OF SOCIAL LIFE’: THE  
RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES BY THE  
DORSET GENTRY, c. 1790 - c. 1834.**

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## Abstract

This case-history explores the governing purposes of the Dorset gentry from the early 1790's until the mid 1830's. It is not a conventional political and administrative history. It seeks rather to reveal the gentry's governing purposes through the processes and contexts of their construction of social and political identities. It takes as its starting point the idea of the materiality of language itself. The idea that language does not reflect or refer to a pre-existing anterior reality but creates meaning by distinguishing explicitly or implicitly what something is from what it is not. This case-history explores the gentry's construction of the terms of an overarching discourse I have called the 'common rules of social life'. In particular the evolving narrative terms of *patriarchal oeconomy*, *political economy* and *paternalism*. It does so to answer the question: 'By what means and for what purposes did this form of discourse and its narrative traditions become established by the gentry to prevail at this time in the past?' The answers are found in the ways and the contexts in which the gentry used this discourse.

First, how did the gentry exercise their power so that this discourse might come into being. Here the structures and institutions of the Commission of the Peace are significant. In particular the ways in which power was monopolised and used by a small fraction of active magistrates. This fraction was active in the committees of the Commission of the Peace and at quarter and petty sessions. Their power came to be deployed to reform county government and poor relief to impose 'natural' moral market relations on Dorset society.

Second, how was the discourse and its constituent elements exercised by the gentry to constitute identities, and how did they determine how people thought and acted? Here the case-history reveals the gentry's construction of identities for Dorset, the parish and the poor. In particular the construction of an identity of Dorset as an arena of natural economic laws and moral endeavour. These identities were taught to rich and poor alike as part of the gentry's purpose to remoralise Dorset society.

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If convention permitted, I would dedicate this history to the memory of Derek Frank Beamish, a friend and teacher who first set me on the path. His untimely death in April 1992 has robbed Dorset of one of its most gifted historians.

## *Abbreviations*

<i>Ag.H.R.</i>	<i>Agricultural History Review</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>D.C.C.</i>	<i>Dorset County Chronicle</i>
<i>D.R.O.</i>	<i>Dorset Record Office</i>
<i>E.H.R.</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Ec&amp;Soc.</i>	<i>Economy and Society</i>
<i>Ec.H.R.</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>Ex.Ec.H.</i>	<i>Explorations in Economic History</i>
<i>f.n.</i>	<i>foot note</i>
<i>H.O.</i>	<i>Home Office</i>
<i>Hl.R.</i>	<i>Historical Review</i>
<i>I&amp;C.</i>	<i>Ideology and Consciousness</i>
<i>I.B.G.</i>	<i>Institute of British Geographers</i>
<i>Int.R.Soc.H.</i>	<i>International Review of Social History</i>
<i>J.B.S.</i>	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
<i>J.Ecc.H.</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>J.Ec.H.</i>	<i>Journal of Economic History</i>
<i>J.H.G.</i>	<i>Journal of Historical Geography</i>
<i>J.R.A.S.</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society</i>
<i>[n.d.]</i>	<i>no date</i>
<i>P.L.C.</i>	<i>Poor Law Commissioners</i>
<i>P&amp;P.</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>P.P.</i>	<i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
<i>P.R.O.</i>	<i>Public Record Office</i>
<i>PDNHAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society</i>
<i>QSM</i>	<i>Quarter Session Minutes</i>
<i>S.J.</i>	<i>Sherborne, Dorchester &amp; Taunton Journal</i>
<i>S.C.</i>	<i>Select Committee</i>
<i>S.J.Pol.E.</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Political Economy</i>
<i>Soc.H.</i>	<i>Social History</i>
<i>T.H.A.</i>	<i>Thomas Hardy Annual</i>
<i>V.S.</i>	<i>Victorian Studies</i>



## CHAPTER ONE

### *Introduction*

My thesis is an attempt to address a problem that seems to me increasingly evident and stubbornly resistant to easy solution. How are social and political identities related to experience and made available for social action?<sup>1</sup> The problem crystallised in my work on the Dorset Commission of the Peace. In particular the ways in which gentry magistrates reinvented themselves as the rulers of rural society in order, as I saw it, to coalesce as a unified governing class. It must be made clear at this point that the category ‘governing class’ was never a thing, entire and whole in itself. At no time during this period could its different fractions be described as a unified ruling class. The Commission was in fact a loose coalition of competing fractions which included the owners of large and smaller estates, the clergy, and professional men like lawyers, business men and bankers.<sup>2</sup> I am here describing a model of a governing class. This model is an ideal type, a touchstone against which to test the evidence from Dorset. I use the term gentry as a convenient shorthand to encompass and describe the active magistrates who governed Dorset during this period. The actual Dorset governing class will be revealed as the thesis proceeds.

My thesis is not a conventional history which seeks to discover determinative origins or ends. It is directed by questions of intelligibility and seeks progressively to understand particular dimensions of the self-identities of the gentry, which are

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<sup>1</sup> For an extended discussion of some of the different approaches to the problem of relating identity to experience see the various contributors in P. Joyce, (ed.), *Class* (Oxford, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> The composition of the Commission of the Peace is discussed in detail in chapter two.

always open to revision and extension. It is more properly what Cousins and Hussain have termed elsewhere 'a case-history'.<sup>3</sup> This approach is by no means new and almost twenty years ago Keith Tribe pioneered a similar strategy to analyse the narrative formation of economic discourses.<sup>4</sup>

The role of the gentry landowner as the governor of rural society has dominated many discussions of the transforming events of nineteenth-century Dorset. He is usually identified as a source of stability and tradition, a man who accepted the necessity for change, but who was nevertheless able and willing to meliorate the worst excesses and consequences to the poor of the transforming forces which were introduced into the county. This gentry landowner is located in an active landscape, implicated in these transforming events but somehow not of them. Although he adapted his governing role to meet the exigencies of changed circumstances, his essential identity as a font of traditional values remained unchanged. In contrast, I have identified the gentry landowner as an instigator of and an active participant in the processes of change. A willing participant who transformed both Dorset society and his own identity as the governor of rural society. The transformation of gentry identities as the governors of rural society was represented both in events and as an event in itself. The construction of gentry self-identities as the governors of rural society was an event, just as the wars with revolutionary France, and the booms and busts of Dorset agricultural production were events. The event of gentry self-identities was about the relationship between general forms of theoretical and strategic knowledge, in particular about the practical inscription of moral discourses within specific policies of poor relief and education. This emphasis on the narrative

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<sup>3</sup> M. Cousins and A. Hussain, *Michel Foucault* (1984), pp. 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> K. Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse* (1978), pp. 80-84.



creation of identities opens to view the gentry and the institutional structures in which they operated as active agents. Their identities and these structures were so interlinked they may be regarded as determinative of, yet irreducible to, one another.

In reconstructing their identities as the natural rulers of rural society the gentry also constructed identities for the county, the parish and the poor. These identities were defined in terms of ultimate purposes within an over-arching discourse that I have termed ‘all the common rules of social life’,<sup>5</sup> and which contained contrasting narratives; for instance: class and culture; reason and revelation; the city and the countryside; paternalism and human nature; education and morality, and most importantly, dependence and independence. The problem of identities seemed all the more urgent to address because as my work progressed it became apparent that it was precisely in this period that the languages in which the subjects of these narratives were made intelligible were themselves articulated as problematic issues. The Dorset magistrate the Reverend Samuel Best described the problem thus:

It is one of the extraordinary disadvantages of an age of boasted enlightenment, that we are in very many instances speaking in an unknown tongue. Our language has undergone a change and education has not kept pace with it. It is difficult for an educated mind not familiarised with the language and ideas of the people to realise to itself our true position.<sup>6</sup>

In exploring the various dimensions of the self-identities of the Dorset gentry I have utilised two related aspects of postmodernist theories that language does not reflect a reality external to it but rather constitutes that reality. First, I have

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<sup>5</sup> The phrase is taken from D.O.P. Okeden, *A Letter to Members in Parliament for Dorsetshire on the Subject of Poor Relief and Labourers Wages* (Blandford, 1830), p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> S. Best, *On Catechising* (1849), p. 46.



employed the notion that language reveals entire systems of meaning or knowledge - not only ideas people have about particular issues but their representations and organisations of life and the world. This provides the possibility to understand how particular moral and cultural identities constructed by the gentry defined (and contained) social practice in Dorset. These identities enabled the gentry to interpret and act on their role in relation to others. I have also used this theory to argue and to illustrate how meaning is constructed through differentiation. It is important to recognise that differentiation does not assume that words have shared and stable definitions in all contexts. In fact, words acquire particular meanings by explicit or implicit contrasts established in specific contexts (or discourses).<sup>7</sup> Positive definitions depend on negatives, indeed imply their existence in order to rule them out. For example, the gentry were able to define the countryside as a natural source of harmony in human relations because they also identified the city as the cause of dissonance in human nature. This kind of interdependence has ramifications well beyond literal definitions, for it involves other relationships in particular usage. To use another example, the gentry depicted the capitalist exploitation of agricultural labourers as a natural element of Divine providence thereby intertwining economic and theological spheres; and they made analogies between rural life and morality that affected how people understood both. In other words, because meaning is developed relationally and differentially, it also produces relationships. Thus to apply this idea of language to my particular subject is to discover that the identity of the gentry rested not only on antitheses (grasping tenant farmers, city bred middle classes and manufacturers) but also on inclusions (the Gentlemen of England and the

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<sup>7</sup> The term discourse is associated with the work of Michel Foucault. For a useful discussion of his work see P. Rabinow, (ed.), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction To Foucault's Thought* (1991).



honest independent poor) as well as exclusions (rationalists, materialists and atheists). Therefore, the universal category of gentry secured its universality through a series of oppositions.

My concerns with theory were defined partly by the literature on class that has come to be termed the 'linguistic turn' by some historians<sup>8</sup>, and partly in a parallel literature on the languages of knowledge and power, expressing an interest in contextualising the operation of such languages, and most thoroughly articulated in the works of Michel Foucault.<sup>9</sup> Many of the basic premises and insights of linguistic theories have been long established in the works of French and German historians and their genesis has been admirably outlined by Peter Schottler in his article, 'Historians and Discourse Analysis'.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, it is only more recently that some English social historians have begun to explore the possibilities of employing postmodern theories of language in their studies. Gareth Stedman Jones', *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-Class History, 1832-1982*, which appeared in 1983, was one of the first works by a major British historian to engage these new theoretical debates.<sup>11</sup> According to Stedman Jones' understanding of the 'linguistic turn' there is no social reality outside or prior to language. Therefore, language should be understood to produce rather than reflect experiences.<sup>12</sup> He directs his attention to account for the conditions of possibility of a particular discourse of class by the operation of that discourse itself, and not by a

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<sup>8</sup> G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 16-22; J.W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988), pp. 53-64; P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge, 1991) pp. 329-335.

<sup>9</sup> See the essays by Foucault, especially 'Truth and Power', in Rabinow, (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 51-75.

<sup>10</sup> P. Schottler, 'Historians and Discourse Analysis', *H.W.J.*, 15 (1983), pp. 37-65.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*



predetermined framework immanent in social, political and economic relationships. He concludes that the contexts in which class emerged in early nineteenth-century England were not economic, but political.<sup>13</sup>

Linguistic theories have come under increasing scrutiny also as a means of explaining people's sense of collective and personal identity in the past. In the works of Joan Scott<sup>14</sup> and Patrick Joyce<sup>15</sup>, identity itself is conceived as multiplex and contradictory, and potentially constructed by a variety of discourses. Joyce suggests that one place we might inquire about formative discourses and the identities in which they dealt might be in the realms of culture as well as of politics and the economy. The discourses and identities we find here often turn out to be about things other than class. At the same time, the meanings of class turn out to be moral and religious, rather than solely political or economic in character, such that identities themselves are multiple. And Joyce suggests the utility of looking to the operations of narrative to discover how a sense of agency and purpose is organised from this flux.<sup>16</sup> This is not to argue that gentry self-identities were created purely discursively within the structures of the discourse of the common rules of social life. There may be no social realities outside or prior to language but clearly the gentry experienced real events like poor harvests, high taxes, or war with a revolutionary French state. These real events also meant that the gentry drew on practical and theoretical knowledges in order to govern Dorset. The fact that their governing purpose was the site of intersection with scientific knowledge implies an approach beyond a self-contained discourse analysis. For instance, the gentry's changing

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> J.W. Scott, 'Language, Gender, and Working Class History' in Joyce, (ed.), *Class*, pp. 155-56.

<sup>15</sup> P. Joyce, 'A People and a Class' in Joyce (ed.) *Class*, pp. 164-66.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.



prescriptions for the management of the poor were derived from their interpretations of the practical consequences for the poor and rural social relations of subsidised agricultural labour. Those consequences were broadly interpreted as demoralisation, insubordination and pauperisation and depended on the gentry's theoretical knowledge about human and economic behaviour. These theoretical knowledges changed through time and were inscribed within the changing identities constructed by the gentry. Changes to these identities were therefore implicated in a shift in modes of moral regulation and governance. This process of iteration meant that gentry self-identities and the knowledge they dealt in were also inscribed within a variety of ethical and theological issues. These were also essential to the formation of the gentry's theories of social life. As a consequence the overarching discourse of the common rules of social life also defined practical problems and solutions to the governance of Dorset. The process by which the gentry constructed identities, self-identities and governing purpose therefore combined ways of theorising, knowing, and classifying, with forms of administration. This means that my case-history goes beyond an analysis which regards discourse purely as a structure within which concepts and explanations are formed.

These literatures on language and identity helped define the aims of my case-history which is to explore the collective identities of the Dorset gentry upon which their governing purpose can be said to have rested. These identities were produced within a discourse of the common rules of social life, a discourse that defined in moral terms the social, economic and political order in Dorset. Identities were made available for action within the operations of narratives of class and culture; reason and obedience; the city and the countryside; paternalism and human nature, and

paternalism and morality. These identities, in their nature, should be understood to be imagined ones. In the term introduced by Cornelius Castoriadis, the identities of the gentry might be said to have formed the ‘social imaginary’ of their time.<sup>17</sup> So considered, the history of the gentry’s ‘social imaginary’ involves an account of how the mobilisation and legitimation of this discourse worked: on what terms - divine providence, moral leadership, for instance - was a sense of social agency conferred, and social authority sanctioned? The goal of a reading of the Dorset gentry’s governing purpose from this perspective, is not to reduce it neatly to a formal political struggle or a particular strategy but to examine the process through which identity and purpose was constructed by formative narratives. These constructed identities and their relevance to the relationship between language and governing purpose suggest that a critical scrutiny of some of the major premises upon which previous studies of the Dorset gentry and its role in managing rural society is long overdue.

The historiography of the British gentry employs very different theoretical preoccupations which mobilise the “facts” of history to explain the hegemony of the gentry. During the last thirty years or so the power, status, profits and formation of the British landed elite have attracted renewed interest from historians. David Spring’s pioneering work on the economic management of landed estates, G.E. Mingay’s *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class*; F.M.L. Thompson’s *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*; H. Perkin’s *Origins of Modern English Society*, and a host of regional studies including Philip Jenkins’ work on the Glamorgan ruling class, Smout’s research on Scottish landowners and

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<sup>17</sup> C. Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 3.



Malcolmson's on the Irish elite<sup>18</sup>, have contributed to revealing a class of capitalist entrepreneurs who often aggressively asserted a belief in their natural right to govern. Another principle defining characteristic of the British landed elite was its readiness, albeit to different degrees, to replenish its ranks with men, heiresses and new money from below.<sup>19</sup> During the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth the formerly separate landed elites of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland began increasingly to attend the same schools, the same universities and to intermarry. Lawrence and Jean Stone and David Cannadine have argued, that the cultural values of an English landed elite became the common currency of a British ruling class during this period.<sup>20</sup> This evolving equilibrium of common values enabled the stability of British social and political institutions to be reconstructed out of the flux and conflicts of the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

This is a forceful presentation but it has been derived for the most part from an uncritical conflation of the self-identities of the gentry as the "FACTS" of history, rather than being themselves historical events. As a result, the complexities of this process have been reduced in the historiography of rural England to a much simpler question: how did the landed elite for so long maintain its supremacy in governing rural England? <sup>22</sup> Despite many differences in emphasis and terminology, most of the answers to this question have centred around the concepts of paternalism and

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<sup>18</sup> F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (1963); T.C. Smout, 'Scottish landowners and economic growth, 1650-1850', *S.J.Pol.E.*, 11 (1964); P. Jenkins, *The Making of a Ruling Class: The Glamorgan Gentry 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983); H. Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society* (1969); A.P.W. Malcolmson, *The Pursuit of an Heiress: Aristocratic Marriage in Ireland 1750-1820* (Ulster, 1982).

<sup>19</sup> Perkin, *Origins*, p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> L. Stone and J.C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 290-95; D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (1990), pp. 8-23.

<sup>21</sup> Perkin, *Origins*, pp. 346-47.

<sup>22</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?*, p. 3.



the following terms:

Philosophical assumption - explicit or unwitting - has supplied the missing links by attaching terms like “experience” or “consciousness”, tying these two evidential poles together in a way which seems intuitively obvious.

What these terms suggest is that the relationship between the two sorts of evidence is one of simple expression.<sup>27</sup>

Part of the problem is the way the term consciousness is used by social historians. For instance, because the concept gentry is assumed to have a real, objective existence, it follows that (consciousness of their) governing purpose was necessarily made available to them when certain objective social, economic and political processes come to pass. In other words, both the gentry and its governing purposes were immanent in social, economic and political relations.<sup>28</sup> The other part of the problem is the way in which the idea of ‘experience’ is associated with the facts of a process registered and articulated by those engaged within it.<sup>29</sup> Thus we know the gentry governed rural society according to the tenets of authoritarian paternalism because, in the words they used, they told one another they did, and by logical extension, they told us as well.

What the concepts experience and consciousness conceal - at least as they have been used in the historiography of rural Britain - is the problematic character of language itself. Both concepts imply that language is a simple medium through which experience finds expression, and that language, simply read, demonstrates a determining relationship between reality, knowledge and therefore social practices.

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.



social control; the principle that an underlying function of most social, or political, institutions and activities is the maintenance of order in a society of conflicting interests.<sup>23</sup> It is now becoming clear, however, that an analytical framework based on the duality of social control and paternalism and the location of the interests of a ruling class within a unified hierarchy, has a number of defects. In a perceptive and critical review of the concepts, theories and conclusions of the many historians employing the analytical framework of social control, F.M.L. Thompson identified one defect in this analytical framework. He reminded his readers that social control 'has never been exercised with unanimity and agreement among the various agencies of authority, nor with complete effectiveness, for otherwise social changes could not have occurred'.<sup>24</sup> But there are other, less obvious, defects in an analytical framework based on the duality of social control and paternalism. This framework is a consequence of the ways that historians of the gentry have worked with two sorts of evidence. On the one hand, they have deduced the cultural unity of the gentry from evidence of their common educational backgrounds, their similar marriage patterns, their political affiliations and other factors. On the other hand, evidence of a common governing purpose has been inferred from their widespread employment of a language of authoritarian paternalism.<sup>25</sup> What renders this particular element of historical practice suspect is the way in which these two types of evidence have been unproblematically connected.<sup>26</sup> Jones defined the problem in

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, M.J. Weiner (ed.) 'Humanitarianism or Control: a symposium on aspects of nineteenth century social reform in Britain and America, *Rice University Studies*, 67 (1981); and A.P. Donajgradski, *Social Control* (1977).

<sup>24</sup> F.M.L. Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *Ec.H.R.*, 2 (1981) p. 206.

<sup>25</sup> See for example, Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite*, p. 301.

<sup>26</sup> G. Stedman Jones, 'Class, "Experience", and Politics', in Joyce (ed.) *Class*, p. 152.



But a century of research in the fields of linguistics, psychology and social anthropology, has argued for the materiality of language itself<sup>30</sup> and the approach of this case-history is therefore to avoid giving issues of the social or economic determinants of knowledge a primary explanatory power.

Theorising of any sort is typically eschewed in the historiography of the English landed elite. For instance, John Cannon claims to have begun his study of the eighteenth century English peerage, ‘with no specific hypothesis in mind’.<sup>31</sup> Cannon, and others, share a preference for “hard facts”. W.O. Aydelotte, reviewing L. Stone’s and Jean C. Fawtier Stone’s ‘Country Houses and their Owners in Hertfordshire, 1540-1897’, commented approvingly that the various methodological techniques employed by the Stones to establish ‘social categories’ were not derived from ‘abstract theory but from what has been observed about the trends of the evidence’.<sup>32</sup> In their introduction to *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880*, the Stones themselves confessed that the most formidable problems they faced in reconstructing the formation of the English landed elite were technical, taxonomical and conceptual, and not once in their massively researched book did they acknowledge any role for theory.<sup>33</sup> This self denying ordinance was followed by F.M.L. Thompson in his *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, and also by Harold Perkin in his *Origins of Modern English Society*; two of the most influential books on the English landed elite written during the last thirty years. The

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<sup>30</sup> For a useful summary of the major contributors to linguistic theory see, P. Jones, *Studying Society: sociological theories and research practices* (1996), pp. 102-11.

<sup>31</sup> J. Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The peerage of eighteenth century England* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 122-23.

<sup>32</sup> W.O. Aydelotte, *et al*, (eds) *The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History* (Princeton, 1972), p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?*, pp. 33-39.

origins of modern English society was ‘a matter of concrete history’ for Perkin.<sup>34</sup> A clearer idea of Perkin’s position on the role of theory in history may also be found in his later work on group dynamics. In this he eschewed theory in favour of empirical methodology. He freely admitted that like all other historians he brought ideologically informed preconceptions and attitudes to his work, but these were constantly subjected to the correctives imposed by the trends in the evidence. In contrast, theories could never put ideology to the test because they were abstract and subjective and ordered the facts rather than allowing the evidence to speak for itself.<sup>35</sup> This rejection of theory in favour of ideology and empiricism is contradictory. It implies that theoretical clarity and historical objectivity are mutually exclusive but only on the basis of some highly charged implicit theorising about the production of knowledge and the nature of the past. The historiography’s general neglect of explicit theorising and Aydelotte’s and Perkin’s specific strictures against theory itself seems to me to be a reformulation of the much older and discredited notion that the past somehow exists “out there” and that recovered in their “pure” and “concrete” forms the facts will simply organise themselves into history.<sup>36</sup>

The contributors to the historiography of eighteenth and nineteenth century Dorset have relied for the most part on the atheoretical premises, assumptions and conclusions of the histories of the English landed elite which have been briefly reviewed above. Barbara Kerr’s social history of Dorset from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, George Body’s work on the administration of the old

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<sup>34</sup> Perkin, *Origins*, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> H. Perkin, ‘Who runs Britain? Elites in British Society Since 1880’ in *The Structured Crowd: Essays in English Social History* (Sussex, 1981), p. 164.

<sup>36</sup> On this point see W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (1970), p. 257.



poor laws and Kevin P. Bawn's more recent doctoral thesis on the relationship between social control and social protest, have adopted a traditional way of writing history determined by the view that the past is synonymous with history itself.<sup>37</sup> Because these histories lack theoretical or conceptual clarity they are at the mercy of the data they use. As a result they follow one another in their representations of the gentry and the gentry's governing purpose during this period. They have each recognised that landed property was concentrated in a relatively few large estates and that a small but powerful number of gentry landowners dominated the social and political affairs of the county.<sup>38</sup> They have also drawn similar conclusions from the evidence of the gentry's domination. The gentry was a homogeneous and unified elite which managed the day to day affairs of Dorset by reference to commonly held principles of *laissez-faire* and paternalist obligations.<sup>39</sup> These obligations were derived from traditional concepts of a gentleman's duties and Christian moral responsibility and mediated the consequences of the capitalist organisation of waged labour to the poor. Kerr argued that the Dorset gentry understood that their survival as a class depended on their active mediation of the boundaries between power and responsibility. In support of her argument she quoted Shaftesbury's exhortation to his fellow landowners, 'to recollect that all wealth, talent, rank and power, are given by God for His own service, not for our luxury, for the benefit of others, not for the pride of ourselves'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> B. Kerr, *Bound to the Soil: A Social History of Dorset, 1750-1918* (1968); G.A. Body, 'The Administration of the Old Poor Laws in Dorset, 1760-1834: with special reference to agrarian distress' (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 1964); K.P. Bawn, 'Social Protest, Popular Disturbances, and Public Order in Dorset, 1790-1837' (PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1984).

<sup>38</sup> Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, pp. 18, 20, 59-60, 189-92; Bawn, 'Social Protest', p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, p. 199; Bawn, 'Social Protest', p. 248.

<sup>40</sup> Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, p. 199.



Body and Bawn demonstrate the gentry's mediation of the consequences of low wages and high prices by referring to the gentry's support for various poor relief allowance systems and make work schemes. These were implemented during periods when the price of bread outstripped the demand for labour. As a consequence the standard of living of the majority of the poor working classes was maintained at a reasonable level.<sup>41</sup> Body and Bawn both draw the same conclusion that the gentry governed Dorset broadly in the interests of the poor as well as the rich.<sup>42</sup> The gentry were able to achieve this happy result because they shared common cultural values which created a common governing purpose.

This is a forceful presentation but it is almost wholly imaginary. The contributors to Dorset historiography have eschewed detailed analysis of the composition of the magistrates who governed on the Commission of the Peace. As a result they have ignored or misconceived the conflicts and tensions generated by differences in gentry self-identities. The atheoretical tradition adopted by these histories does not invalidate their contributions but it does limit the questions that may be put to the evidence they adduce in support of their arguments and conclusions. What remains to be done in this introduction is to indicate works that have been especially influential in the formulation of my own theories and concepts. They suggest to me fruitful ways to reveal the links between social and political identities and social action.

Some of the approaches used to exemplify aspects of the construction of self-identities in my case-history were introduced in Mitchell Dean's book on the

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<sup>41</sup> Body, 'The Administration of the Poor Laws', p. 320.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*; Bawn, 'Social Protest', pp. 90, 226, 248.

relationships between liberalism and government.<sup>43</sup> I am indebted to Dean's work for suggesting a way to organise my work. Two points should be made here. The organisation and concerns of this case-history are informed by theories of language, knowledge and structure which suggest to me opposite readings of the texts used by Dean. His concerns are with the genealogy of liberal governance, in particular the ways in which capitalism organised the poor. His identification of the links between notions of poverty and state forms is premised on the proposition that the constitution of poverty followed a fundamental transformation of governance. As Dean himself acknowledges, much research remains to be done to reveal and understand the ways in which the identities created by liberal governance could be internalised as self-government.<sup>44</sup> His emphasis on the constitution of poverty and the poor by the external agencies of liberal governance is, however, only one possible reading of the genealogy of self-government. I tread the path of reading what he terms the texts of 'History and genealogy' in the opposite direction and suggest that, in Dorset at least, the governance and identity of the poor were constituted by the terms of the gentry's self-identities. Their self-identities in turn were constituted partly as a series of narrative and discursive oppositions to emerging state forms of power - the genealogy of liberal governance in Dean's terms - in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain.

The self-identities of the Dorset gentry included their ideas of the poor and poverty. Professor J.R. Poynter's book on society and pauperism has been influential here because of the wide range and number of contemporary texts reproduced or cited in

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<sup>43</sup> M. Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty. Toward a genealogy of liberal governance* (1991).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.



his work.<sup>45</sup> His scholarship has provided an accessible body of texts for subsequent historians to use. However, his concerns are for intellectual history and the genealogy of views on poverty. These concerns lead him to conclude that there were 'few coherent views on poverty' in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>46</sup> The texts which Poynter painstakingly consulted and reproduced seem to me to suggest the opposite conclusion. His analysis of eighteenth and nineteenth century texts is derived from an anachronistic reading of the debate on poverty through the lens of twentieth century social and economic theories. In contrast, I look for their internal forms of coherence and not for evidence of twentieth century scientific knowledge.

From the perspectives of the Dorset historiography, the ideas and practices of poor relief in the eighteenth and nineteenth century have been understood as elements partly of the world views which are relational to the social(class) positions of the administrators of poor relief, the gentry, the farmers, the ratepayers, etc.; and partly as elements which are directly relational to local economic conditions. In such a conventional presentation, the defenders of the old systems of poor relief are said to embody the paternalism and the labour-regulation beliefs of the gentry and their allies amongst the Anglican clergy. These beliefs are presented as an unmediated reflection of the traditional, hierarchical social order of rural Dorset. These perspectives are suspect, not least because concepts and theories which stress the essential orderliness of society, when pressed to their logical conclusions, make the different governing strategies of the gentry difficult to identify and even more difficult to explain. The intense local focus of most of the social histories of Dorset

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<sup>45</sup> J.R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief 1795-1834* (1969).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

obscures the ways in which the activities of the British state impacted on the social, economic and political life of Dorset. The unconscious theorising and conceptual ambiguities in the works of Kerr, Body and Bawn, for example, have rendered suspect many of their conclusions about the nature and governing purpose of the Dorset gentry. Their conclusions are in any case finally suspect because none of these authors has undertaken any systematic or detailed investigation of the Dorset gentry. They have applied instead the premises, assumptions and conclusions of a much better known historiography of the English landed elite. What remains to be done in this introduction is to introduce brief summaries of the chapters which will implement those investigations to provide an alternative interpretation of the relationship between the experience and consciousness of the Dorset gentry.

I begin my case-history proper in **chapter two** intending to reconstruct data on the gentry and others who comprised the active magistrates on the Commission of the Peace. This would provide preliminary data in order to enter into the meanings of the structures and institutions of local government in Dorset. This was easier to propose than to practise. Some of the sources were unhelpful, while others proved to be non-existent. They did, however, directly and indirectly disclose the gentry who acted as magistrates. In so doing, they also revealed that Dorset was governed by a loose coalition of different interests such as large and small owners of land, business men, lawyers and bankers. This coalition of interests was constructed on the ruins of an older governing class whose power had been ultimately broken by a demographic crisis, in particular a failure to produce male heirs. Not all of these men were active to the same degree, however, and the effective government of the county was conducted by a much smaller fraction of active magistrates who



gradually monopolised power within the committees of the Commission of the Peace. It was this smaller fraction who were responsible for reorganising petty sessions and general sessions. Merely to describe the past is not enough and the purpose of this chapter is more than merely the presentation of empirical data. It has also generated hypotheses, concepts and theories. The reorganisation of sessions represented the active magistrates' anxieties about certain structural changes - for example, de-industrialisation, out-migration and improving farming. The reform of the structures and meaning of local government also represented the gentry's changing ideas of themselves as gentlemen and governors of rural society. In particular their ideas of patriarchy, paternalism and the poor. Some are testable and usable in this case-history others proved more elusive and remain to be tested elsewhere.

In **chapter three** I show how the structural changes outlined in chapter two preoccupied the active magistrates in this period. These men were caught between the discourses of political economy, which threatened to undermine their privileges in religious and civil law, and the traditional patriarchal discourses of stewardship and obedience, which were increasingly threatened by utilitarian radicalism, atheism and republicanism. I explore the gentry's resolution of this crisis in terms of the reconstruction of their self-identities from rural patriarchs to authoritarian paternalists. This enabled them to identify themselves as morally defined and divinely justified subjects and convert the exercise of their power as a service in the interests of all those they ruled.

In **chapter four** I explore the ways in which the gentry developed an identity of Dorset as the moral and cultural antithesis to metropolitan values, political economy

and the encroachments of a potent centralising state. The emerging identity of Dorset as a unitary terrain and the site of non-discretionary, statistical and economic government was constituted within the terms of the self-identities of the gentry as the moral and culturally superior members of rural society. It gradually voided an older identity of Dorset as a federation of patriarchal households governed by the discretion of individual gentry patriarchs.

In **chapter five** I suggest how and why the gentry constructed a narrative of belonging which modified the idea of the patriarchal household and recreated the parish as an arena of moral endeavour. The reconstruction of a moral identity for the parish was a means to manage and control the modernisation of Dorset's rural society in terms other than those set by the growing industrial and commercial centres of the midlands and north of England. To belong to a parish also imposed certain social and economic as well as moral obligations on the gentry and the poor. I use evidence from the commission of inquiry into the poor laws and from other sources to reveal the social and economic components of belonging and their meaning.

In **chapter six** I explore the context of the resolution of the Dorset magistrates in 1792 to institute a system of poor allowances for the children of poor working men. This context provides a framework to understand the relationship between the configuration and practices of poor relief and gentry notions of the burdens of the poor. The relationship between ideas and practice was gradually fractured by tensions between competing gentry prescriptions of the burdens of the poor. In particular the tensions between their competing definitions of consistent criteria of moral and political judgement in the management of poor relief. These tensions



were also inscribed within the terms of gentry identities and the campaign for poor law reform after 1830 was therefore a problem of competing gentry identities.

**Chapter seven** examines competing prescriptions for the management of the poor and the meanings of the so-called paternalist ethos, which turn out to be multiple and unstable. The Dorset gentry are shown to employ two distinct types of paternalist discourse which I have labelled material and moral. I explore some of the ways in which the gentry constructed their self-identities to create a sense of agency and purpose to make their competing ideas of paternalism available for social action. The chapter concludes by suggesting how the discourse of moral paternalism came to be influential in Dorset.

In **chapter eight** I explore the contemporary debates on what was an appropriate education for the poor. Establishing Elementary and Sunday schools in Dorset had a purpose beyond remoralising the poor and teaching them a little rote learning. They were the means both to educate and revivify rural society in the terms of the gentry's identities, and to rebuild the authority of the Anglican church and preserve the political power of the gentry. The competing prescriptions for working class education thus became another site of the wider debate on the proper governing purpose of the Dorset gentry.

My case-history concludes in **chapter nine**. Between 1790 and 1834 the Dorset gentry reconstructed a series of political and social identities. This was a necessary process which enabled them to make accommodation with the internal and external changes which were threatening their interests as they perceived them. In seeking to understand these processes and the identities in which they dealt I have employed the notion that language does not reflect a pre-existing anterior social reality but

rather constructs that reality. As a result it is possible to understand how particular moral and cultural identities defined by the gentry constructed and contained social practices. The case-history concludes with the suggestion that my approach to historical practice creates a position where different (and more appropriate) questions may be put to the evidences of the social, political and cultural lives of the gentry.

Many of the interpretations and conclusions in this case-history are derived from the various tables of data reproduced in the four appendices at the end of this work. I have chosen not to insert these tables in the chapters of this case-history but to reference them in the footnotes, for two reasons. First, the sheer number of tables (114) and their complex formats interrupt and distract from the arguments I am trying to develop. Second, the sources of the tables and the methods by which they were produced require 1,500 words of explanatory keys, footnotes and more than 200 references, none of which can be sensibly incorporated in the body of the text.



## CHAPTER TWO

### *The Commission of the Peace: The gentry and the reform of county government in Dorset<sup>1</sup>*

The Dorset landed gentry, all historians agree, sustained and extended their hegemony over rural society because of the interconnections between certain cultural facts. These may be summarised as connections by marriage, education and common ideas of governing purpose. It is also said that these cultural facts became operative because of the longevity of the gentry: the families which had ruled Dorset in the seventeenth century ruled Dorset still in the nineteenth.<sup>2</sup> The political dominance of gentry and aristocratic landowners in their counties was conceded by many nineteenth century commentators to be a salient fact in the English way of life. Writing about the English landed elite, the nineteenth century radical Bernard Cracroft admitted their continued hegemony over society in the following terms:

They have a common freemasonry of blood, a common education, common pursuits, common ideas, a common dialect, a common religion, and - what more than anything else binds men together - a common prestige, a prestige growled at occasionally, but on the whole conceded, and even, it must be owned, secretly liked by the country at large.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The tabular representations of the activities of the Dorset Commission of the Peace and other references to the social composition of the gentry during this period are derived from data reproduced in appendices at the end of this thesis. The sources of these data are acknowledged in the appendices and not in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> B. Kerr, *Bound to the Soil: A Social History of Dorset, 1750-1918* (1968), pp. 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in L. Stone and J.C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1986), p. 305.

It is one purpose of this case-history to argue that it is not possible to infer a common governing purpose from evidence of common cultural facts about the Dorset gentry. In fact their governing purpose had to be constructed from contested cultural values. In the course of this chapter I will show how a common governing purpose was constructed in the terms of rational and economical local government defined by an ascendant active magistracy within the Commission of the Peace. These active magistrates were a small fraction of the overall membership of the Commission of the Peace and were responsible for remodelling the structures of petty sessions and quarter sessions. I will suggest that their concerns to redefine the governing purpose of the gentry can be explained as a contest between their emerging ideas of political economy and the pre-existing ideas of the patriarchal household. I use the weaker term 'suggest' deliberately because the difficulties in reconstructing their concerns proved to be serious. The records of the deliberations of the magistrates have been lost. The detailed minutes books of the quarter sessions, catalogued in the Index to the County Records, proved to be missing. The minutes of the Clerk to the Justices which were extant for the period 1786 to 1859 recorded some of the magistrates' pronouncements in some detail but only to 1801, and no petty sessions minutes books have survived for the period under study. Fortunately, the records of magistrates' attendance at quarter sessions together with a brief commentary on some of their resolutions remained. It also proved possible to reconstruct magistrates' attendance at petty session by using other sources. Using these sources and records to recover the identities of the gentry who were appointed to act as magistrates made it clear that the Commission of the Peace was in fact a coalition of different fractions which included the owners of large and smaller



estates, the clergy, professional men such as lawyers, and business men and bankers. Moreover, when I reconstructed the distribution of magistrates' attendance at petty and quarter sessions, it was also clear that some members of the gentry governed Dorset rather more than others.

Notwithstanding the lacunae in the sources, the wider context in which the changes to county government took place was well documented. Thus newspapers, private correspondence, sermons, contemporary parliamentary reports and a variety of other materials bearing on the government of Dorset showed a concern with the ideas of stewardship, subsistence and hierarchy; but also with ideas of the market, wealth creation, contract and the idle poor. In other words they exemplified a contest between the ideas of patriarchy and the patriarchal household, and the ideas of individual responsibility and political economy. The question remained: how to make sense of these ideas? It seemed to me that the tensions between, and within, these ideas of patriarchy and political economy revealed divisions within the magistracy on their proper governing role. But the contributors to the Dorset historiography repeatedly express the view that the Dorset gentry were a unified elite with a common governing purpose. Their common governing purpose is said to have been derived in part from shared ideals about their paternalist responsibilities, and in part also from such factors as their long association with the county, intermarriage, and a common education at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. It is very much the case, however, that the repetitions and assertions about the cultural unity of the gentry are supported by no evidence. As I will show elsewhere, the unity of the Dorset gentry is the propaganda of the gentry

themselves.<sup>4</sup> If the historians of Dorset society are mistaken about the fundamental issue of cultural unity perhaps they are also mistaken about the alleged consequences of this unity? I will suggest that their hypothesis of a direct, positive relationship between common cultural values and common governing purpose cannot be supported because it confuses causes for effects.

My alternative hypothesis looks at the issue of gentry unity from a different perspective. The hypothesis is that the effect of constructing a common governing purpose was precisely the cause of gentry unity and here my debt to other historians will be apparent. Broadly speaking, up until 1790 the structures of the Commission of the Peace in Dorset represented a model of the form of the patriarchal family as a collection of individual households or localities. The components of this model represented a complex interlacing of knowledge, policy, and practice and are discussed in detail in elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> Individual magistrates asserted an absolute right to manage the affairs of their households in accordance with their interests. They defined a household as any parish or place where they owned property and consequently did not confine their activities as justices to the parish in which they resided. This model of government encouraged competition between the social and economic interests of individual households/parishes and obstructed or made difficult the definition of a collective common interest. As a result the unreformed Commission of the Peace was not well equipped to deal with the consequences to Dorset rural society and economy of the accelerating process of social, economic and political change in Britain. A minority of the most active magistrates, anxious about the stability of Dorset and the security of their property, came together in a

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<sup>4</sup> Chapters three and four.

<sup>5</sup> Chapters four and five.



loose coalition in order to reorganise the Commission to better manage the processes of change. The process of reorganising local government in Dorset was influenced by their different representations of society and the social within the competing discourses of oeconomy and economy. During the forty years or so from the seventeen nineties, the history of the Commission of the Peace was a process of implementing the substance of the theories of political economy while maintaining as much as possible of the form of a patriarchal model of county government. As we will see elsewhere, the process of reforming local government in Dorset was influenced also by gentry anxieties about the activities of a centralising state and the consequences of such processes as industrialisation, enclosures, the decline of rural industries and out-migration.<sup>6</sup>

The discussion of the reorganisation of county government that follows is derived partly from data on magistrates' activities on the Commission of the Peace reproduced in the tables in Appendix B. It is important to note here that the argument I develop about the origins and distribution of power within the institutions and structures of the Commission of the Peace does not depend on data regarding the size of land holdings. The exclusion of such data has been taken for practical and logical reasons. These data do not for the most part exist and the methodological technique devised by Grigg and advocated by Martin to compute acreage equivalents from Land Tax payment simply does not work for this period in Dorset. A comparison between the acreages computed in this way and the measured acreages of the same holdings in the very few surviving estate records reveal disparities too great to place any reliance on Martin's technique. I would suggest

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<sup>6</sup> Chapter four.

that he was fortunate in his choice of parishes which seem to have been subject to a uniform rate of Land Tax. Evidence given before one Select Committee in the eighteen forties demonstrates that the Land Tax was in many instances applied very unequally in different districts in England.<sup>7</sup> Tithe surveys do not compensate for the lacunae in estate records and are unsatisfactory as a source of the size, distribution and ownership of land in Dorset. Some surveys are missing while some parishes, being historically tithe free, had never been surveyed. Yet more parishes were only partially subject to tithes and their surveys were also an incomplete record of land ownership. More important than these practical considerations is a well founded logical objection to employing data on the size of land-owning as a means to predict the real interests and the actual social consciousness of different magistrates. The error is not in establishing a causal connection between different interests in the Commission of the Peace and different sizes of landed estate. The error is, in the words of E. P. Thompson, ‘a lapse in historical logic...the suggestion that ideas or events are, in essence, the same things as the causative context - that ideas may be reduced (as one reduces a complex equation) to the “real” class interests which they express’.<sup>8</sup>

The identity of Dorset as a model of the patriarchal household defined social, political and economic relationships in biblical terms of the enforcement of familial responsibility. Charles Toogood put it thus:

We are all children of the same common Father, the Parent of the Universe,  
the Sovereign Disposer of all events...For not only Human Society itself, but

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<sup>7</sup> D.B. Grigg, ‘The Land Tax Returns’, *Ag.H.R.*, 11 (1963), pp. 83-88; J.M. Martin, ‘Land Ownership and the Land Tax Returns’, *Ag.H.R.*, 14 (1966), pp. 96-103.

<sup>8</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (1981), p. 290.



that Subordination, and Distinction of Ranks, without which it cannot well subsist, must ultimately be resolved into the Will and Providence of God.<sup>9</sup>

The reverend Charles Fleet's address to the assembled magistrates at the Assizes in Dorchester in March 1796 took up and extended Toogood's elements of 'Human Society'. Addressing the court on the purpose of God's Creation he told them:

measure, to the support of the whole world - thus - in that part which concerns God Almighty hath adjusted every part, so as to make it serviceable, in some mankind, hath he allowed several stations, and made each subservient to some general end. Hence those duties of liberality and relief to the poor from the rich:- service and obedience to the rich from the poor:- protection to the weak from the power of the great:- instruction to the simple from the wisdom of the wise.<sup>10</sup>

This type of governmental discourse, as Keith Tribe and Michel Foucault have suggested, has an oeconomic, or 'householding' rather than economic conception of the art of government.<sup>11</sup> What Sir James Steuart called in 1767 'the art of providing for all the wants of a family, with prudence and frugality'.<sup>12</sup> This conception of government has for its central concern the formation of the population as an object of knowledge as a means of evaluating the merits of various policies. By the late eighteenth century, however, the policies of county government began to be evaluated on the premise of Adam Smith and other eighteenth-century writers of

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<sup>9</sup> D.R.O., PE/SH/AL2/14: C. Toogood, *A Sermon Preached in the Parish of Sherborne in the County of Dorset on the Anniversary of a Society of Young Persons* (Sherborne, 1781), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> D.R.O., PE/SH/AL2/16: C. Fleet, *Four Sermons on Public Occasions dedicated to E.B. Portman; Sermon Preached at Dorchester Assizes, March 11, 1796* (Dorchester, 1796), p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> K. Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse* (1978), pp. 80-84; M. Foucault, 'Governmentality', *I & C.*, 6 (1979), pp. 5-21.

<sup>12</sup> A.S. Skinner, (ed.), *Sir James Steuart, An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1966), vol. 1, p. 15.



population that ‘what encourages the progress of population and improvement, encourages that of real wealth and greatness’.<sup>13</sup> Adam Smith’s definition of Political Oeconomy which, ‘considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or, legislator’ had two principle objects: to enable the people to secure their own support and to create wealth to support the public services.<sup>14</sup> This was a modification of Steuart’s definition of the art of government which had assigned as a duty to the rich the responsibility for the subsistence of the poor. R. S. Neale has shown how this modification of the terms of oeconomy took place. *The Wealth of Nations* was subject to a re-reading within a generation of its publication. Smith’s representations of his world and its history were rapidly bowdlerised and pirated by others. This new reading constituted the art of government in the narrative terms of a conception of the economy as a Divinely specified independent and determinate sphere. This ‘natural law’ caused all personal, political and moral freedoms. The narrative of the immanence of the ‘hidden hand’ of the natural economy would be used gradually to vitiate a model of society as a federation of patriarchal households. In its place the governing purpose of the England’s magistrates would begin to be reconstructed in the terms of their collective responsibility for economical government.<sup>15</sup> The result was that a myth of Smith as the creator and author of laissez-faire political economy was perpetuated.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A. Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1947 edn), vol. 2, p. 566.

<sup>14</sup> R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner, (eds), *A. Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1976), vol. 1, p. 428.

<sup>15</sup> M. Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty. Toward a genealogy of liberal governance* (1991), pp. 135-136.

<sup>16</sup> R.S. Neale, *Writing Marxist History. British Society, Economy and Culture since 1700* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 44-45.



The interests and purposes of county government in Dorset before the 1790s had also to be constructed from the knowledge of populations derived by individual landowners within a loose federation of households. Like all federations, Dorset's county government required some touchstone to evaluate policies and regulate the distribution of power between and within its constituent parts. That touchstone was the terms of the patriarchal model of the household as a counterweight to the utilitarian terms of rational government. The patriarchal model of government defined the institutional structures of county government, the petty sessions, the quarter sessions and the parish in the terms of reciprocal ties and an intimate knowledge of all those subsumed within the hierarchy of the household.<sup>17</sup> As Coleby has shown, the determination of the landed classes in post-Restoration England to re-establish their power led to the drawing up of a great variety of nominal lists of the population.<sup>18</sup> These lists were compiled for national and local interests and purposes. There were those public lists which identified the payers, defaulters and the exempt for taxation purposes, such as the Hearth tax assessments compiled to raise revenue for the Exchequer.<sup>19</sup> There were also what may be termed private lists of population which famously include Gregory King's *Natural and political observations and conclusions upon the state and condition of England* and John Graunt's *Natural and Political Observations made upon the Bills of Mortality*.<sup>20</sup> To these may be added William Stevenson's observations in his

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<sup>17</sup> P. Laslett, (ed.), *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 11-13, 63. D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion. Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 38-40, 48.

<sup>18</sup> A.M. Coleby, *Central government and the localities: Hampshire 1649-1689* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 87-155.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, C.A.F. Meekings, *Dorset hearth tax assessments, 1662-1664* (Dorchester, 1951).

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, P. Laslett, 'Natural and political observations on the population of late seventeenth-century England: reflections on the work of Gregory King and John Graunt', in K. Schurer and T. Arkell (eds), *Surveying the People* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 6-30.



*General View* of the agriculture of Dorset. The *General View* defined the purposes of county government as an object of knowledge in terms of the organisation and functions of markets.<sup>21</sup>

The patriarchal model of government also celebrated the power of local discretion and autonomy. In the eye of the law, however, the county was a unit of obligation bound by statutes to represent and fulfil the wishes of the national government. As national government identified more purposes for central authority so the strengthening of central capacity resulted in the devolution of more authority to local county government. The government of Dorset before 1835 was, therefore, fundamentally a local matter, conducted by practical men responding to local problems. As a matter of fact, before Municipal Reform in 1835, magistrates acting in quarter sessions, petty sessions or on their own discretion, were possessed of what Sydney and Beatrice Webb have described as ‘the largest measure of self-government’.<sup>22</sup> This does not mean, however, that there are any *a priori* grounds on which to assume that the discussions and practice of county government were conducted in terms which simply reflected the nature of the different localities in Dorset. In particular there can be no presumption that the governing purpose of the gentry is simply reducible to immanent cultural values or the functions of the institutional structures of county government. This is not a new approach and the idea that English local government can be best located and understood in the context of its shifting and conflicting power bases was most forcefully argued by the Webbs almost ninety years ago.<sup>23</sup> In the course of this chapter and case-history I will argue

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<sup>21</sup> W. Stevenson, *General View of the Agricultural Survey of the County of Dorset; with Observations of the Means of its Improvement* (1815), pp. 104-118, 121.24.

<sup>22</sup> S. Webb and B. Webb, *English Local Government. The Parish and the County* (1963 edn.), p. 309.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 285-86.



that the governing purpose of the Dorset Commission of the Peace can be more fruitfully understood in terms of magistrates' conflicting interpretations of the patriarchal household model of county government.

The Commission of the Peace began to be the premier locus for administering the affairs of the county in about 1710. From this time the role of hundred juries in county government went into decline. But it was only finally in 1752, that presentments by hundred juries ceased and magistrates, acting on their own initiative, superseded their role in county government.<sup>24</sup> Whether this was from a general repugnance of 'inquisitorial government', which had become tainted by its associations with the political and social dislocations of the interregnum, as the Webbs alleged, or whether as a consequence of the logic of a developing class society with Justices taking power into their own hands in support of their political and economic interests, is a matter for debate, but the consequences were clear enough.<sup>25</sup> A system of local government that had broadly represented the interests of a relatively wide cross section of Dorset society had been gradually dismantled or displaced by one rooted in a much narrower constituency. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, therefore, the history of the Commission of the Peace in Dorset was a process of the gradual concentration of power into the hands of the gentry whose economic fortunes were closely tied to the fortunes of Dorset agriculture. Their power had been aggregated by a process of usurpation, attenuation and attrition from a plethora of parish and county bodies such as the vestry, the manor and leet courts, and the offices of Sheriff and parish constable,

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 475.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

each of which came to be practically superseded or controlled by magistrates sitting at general and petty sessions.<sup>26</sup>

The county was divided into four Divisions for the purpose of organising local government. The General Sessions of the Commission of the Peace were held in rotation in the towns of Blandford, Sherborne, Shaftesbury and Bridport. In addition, routine adjournments from these four divisions were held at the county town of Dorchester in which place the Assizes for the whole county was also held.<sup>27</sup>

The county was divided also into nine petty session divisions: Blandford North, centred on the town of Blandford; Blandford South administered from the borough of Wareham; Dorchester, where sessions were held in rotation at Dorchester and Weymouth; Shaftesbury East where sessions were rotated between the towns of Wimborne and Cranborne; Shaftesbury West administered from the borough of Shaftesbury itself; and the divisions of Bridport, Sherborne, Cerne and Sturminster Newton where the business of petty sessions was conducted in the towns and boroughs of the same name.<sup>28</sup> As well as the forum of the general and petty sessions, from the end of the eighteenth century the exercise of power at the county level began to be conducted through a system of committees which were co-opted to take charge of the administration and also the finances of the building and repair of roads, bridges and county stock generally; the management and expenditure of the county Gaol and Lunatic Asylum; and auditing the treasurer's accounts. In addition,

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 285-86, 298, 475.

<sup>27</sup> These divisions and adjournments are recorded in, D.R.O., QSM 3/11: Clerk of the Peace's Minutes, 1786-96; QSM 3/12, 1796-99; QSM 1/11. D.R.O., Quarter Sessions Order Books: 1783-97; QSM 1/12, 1798-1806; QSM 1/13, 1806-12; QSM 1/14, 1812-19; QSM 1/15, 1819-26; QSM 1/16, 1827-1836. See also, Webb and Webb, *The Parish and the County*, p. 309.

<sup>28</sup> The composition of petty sessions is give in Appendix B: Tables B1.1 to B1.9 inclusive.



*ad hoc* committees were periodically established to enquire into such issues as the county rate and the expenditure on prosecutions.

The costs of governing Dorset were financed out of the county rate. The rating system had its origins in the sixteenth century when the power to levy a rate was first granted to the Justices of the Peace by the Statute of Bridges in 1530.<sup>29</sup> At that period, however, a rate could only be levied with the consent of an assembly of all the parish constables, or failing that, two of the most ‘honest’ inhabitants of the parish. It took more than two hundred years before the power to levy what in practice were taxes, was consolidated in the County Rates Act of 1738 but which made no mention of the requirement for local consent to the rate.<sup>30</sup> By the late eighteen twenties, the absence of local consent had resulted in a series of protracted and expensive appeals against the county rate which had not been generally revalued since 1672. General concern amongst the ratepayers in Dorset over the absolute weight of the rates was not reflected within the Commission of the Peace and magistrates were more exercised by the inequalities of its burdens.<sup>31</sup> For example, the rise of Weymouth as a fashionable spa and holiday resort to become the county’s most populous town by 1841 brought no revenue to the county coffers. Weymouth was exempt from the county rate having been incorporated after 1672. The dramatic increase in enclosures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the profits accruing from these could not as new lands be assessed to the county rate unless a revaluation was undertaken; and more generally the decay in many of Dorset’s older manufacturing towns and markets was not reflected in the amounts to which they

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<sup>29</sup> 22 Henry VIII, c. 5.

<sup>30</sup> 12 George II, c. 29.

<sup>31</sup> H.F. Yeatman, *An Inquiry into the Present State of the County Rate, together with the Minutes of his Evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the County Rate* (1833).



were assessed to the county rate.<sup>32</sup> Attempts to revalue the county rate to take into account the redistribution of the wealth in the county had been made in 1827 and 1828 by Harry Farr Yeatman and Edward Berkeley Portman but had foundered on the rocks of mutual suspicion between magistrates and had come to nothing.<sup>33</sup> It is unsurprising that different members of the gentry had different ideas of where their best financial interests lay. How could this be otherwise? The category the Dorset gentry was comprised of different fractions whose authority to govern rural Dorset had no deep roots in the past.

The gentry's authority as the principle governors of rural Dorset was only first established in 1752 during a period of demographic crisis.<sup>34</sup> Until about 1700 the gentry reproduced itself usually from marriages within the county and most of its members could trace their ancestry back through several generations and sometimes centuries of direct links with the county. From about 1700, however, this older pattern of reproduction and the authority it commanded through the Commission of the Peace was gradually undermined mostly by a failure to produce male heirs but also from insolvency. As a result, between 1700 and 1800, ninety six families vanished on the failure of the male line or from bankruptcy. And by 1859, only eight of the land-owning families established previous to 1500 in Dorset, still existed in the male line. They were the Bingham, Russell, Digby, Frampton, Bond, Tregonwell, Weld and Floyer families.<sup>35</sup> Of these families, the Russells were absentees and the bulk of their landed estates and family fortunes were tied up in

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Webb and Webb, *The Parish and the County*, p. 475.

<sup>35</sup> J. Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset* (Blandford, 1773). vol. I, pp. lvii, lxii-lxiv. The History was published in four volumes and two subsequent editions appeared between 1796-1815 and 1861-1874. The references in this case-history are taken from the third edition published in 1874.



land and mineral extraction in Devon and urban development in London. And, for reasons which are discussed below, the Welds and Bonds only came late into the Commission of the Peace, after 1829. By 1790, therefore, the longer established gentry families which survived to reproduce themselves were just beginning a process to reconstruct their authority from the ruins the Commission of the Peace. They did not enjoy the luxury of reasserting their authority unchallenged. Other families more recently established in Dorset, the beneficiaries of commercial wealth, fortunate marriages or inheritance, were beginning to be appointed in numbers on the Commission of the Peace.

The gentry magistrates on the newly emerging Commission of the Peace comprised very different fractions - more cosmopolitan, more the product of government service, composed of families made rich through careers in commerce or the professions, particularly the law. A few examples will serve to illustrate this process. Well connected gentry who were appointed to act as magistrates included Anthony Bain. Bain had purchased his Dorset estate in 1796 but was appointed to the Commission of the Peace only after he became physician extraordinary to the Prince of Wales in 1829.<sup>36</sup> A fortunate inheritance enriched Thomas Bastard. He was descended from a long established Dorset family prominent in the economic and political life of Blandford Forum but only became a magistrate in 1819 after he inherited the Spetisbury estate of the Horlock family which had made its fortune exploiting sugar and slaves in the West Indies.<sup>37</sup> William Morton Pitt's ancestors inherited their Dorset estates in the eighteenth century by marriage. Their fortune had also been made from sugar and slaves in the West Indies as well as from the

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 419, 443.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 522.

Durham collieries and clay mining in Dorset.<sup>38</sup> The Drewes, enriched by the legal profession, had purchased their estates in 1783, and seven years later the Farquharsons invested their fortune made in the East India Trade in a Dorset estate. A long established Scottish family, they claimed descent from King Malcolm.<sup>39</sup> Industry and shipping also provided the wealth and estate to gain admittance to the Commission of the Peace. The Garland family was one of the two most prominent commercial and political dynasties in Poole. Their fortune had been made in shipping and the Newfoundland trade. The other members of the dynasty were Sir John Lester and his heir Benjamin Lester-Lester. Ship owners, wine merchants and guano traders, they were pre-eminent in the booming Newfoundland trade in cod fish.<sup>40</sup> The Elton family were also commercial magnates but from Bristol. Their wealth had been acquired from the seventeenth century onwards from iron founding, glass making and cloth manufactures.<sup>41</sup> Many Dorset gentry fortunes had been founded by trading in the twin commodities of sugar and slaves. The Gordons and the Greatheads were enriched through trade in slaves and sugar from Bristol and the West Indies and purchased their estates in the eighteenth century. Edward Greathead, the last of his line, devolved his fortune to his cousin Edward Harris in 1814 who changed his name to Edward Harris Greathead.<sup>42</sup> The Richards family had purchased their Dorset estate in 1687 from money made in the Spanish

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1. p. 526; vol. 2, p. 560; D.R.O., D396/E93: Rivers Estate, 1793; and D/FAR/1: Scott Estate papers for 1807 where Morton Pitt's investments and properties are listed in the sale papers prior to their purchase by Lord Chancellor Eldon (Scott).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 274, 276; vol. 4, p. 323; vol. 1, p. 285.

<sup>40</sup> D. Beamish, J. Hillier, H.F.V. Johnstone, *Merchants and Mansions of Poole* (Poole, 1976), pp. 15-19. See also the biography of Benjamin Lester in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5 (1983).

<sup>41</sup> W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Somerset*, 6 vols (1911), vol.2, p. 430.

<sup>42</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 3, pp. 114-116.



merchant trade. They subsequently inherited the property of the reverend John Clavell and changed their name to Clavell in the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

Between 1790 and 1835 only a minority of the magistrates centred their activities solely on the management of their estates. A large number of magistrates, as many as seventy nine per cent in the decade 1800-09,<sup>44</sup> combined the management of their estates with other business or professional interests, inside and outside of Dorset.<sup>45</sup> Put in its simplest terms, therefore, at any particular time these different orientations represented potential fractures within the gentry on issues relating to the government of Dorset. In particular, metropolitan cultural values were a constant potential challenge to the terms of unchangeable constancy which had been historically inscribed within the identity of Dorset.<sup>46</sup>

These potential fractures were not mediated by marriage ‘a common free masonry of blood’ or education. Gentry marriage patterns reveal a plethora of indirect family connections. They also fairly clearly suggest the existence of a social distance between most magistrates<sup>47</sup> that was not bridged by education. During the last decade of the eighteenth century, for example, thirty eight per cent of the active magistrates never attended a university and throughout the period 1790-1835 almost one-third of the active magistrates had never attended a university.<sup>48</sup>

Qualification for Justice of the Peace in law had been fixed at the possession of a freehold estate of not less than £20 per annum, although in exceptional cases the Lord Chancellor was empowered to add persons of legal experience who had not the

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 127, 199, 304; vol. 2, p. 386; vol 3., pp. 114-15, 434-435, 439.

<sup>44</sup> Appendix B: Tables B4.2; B4.2.1; B4.2.2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B4.1 to B4.5.2 inclusive.

<sup>46</sup> Chapters three and four.

<sup>47</sup> Appendix A: Tables A2.1 to A2.5 inclusive.

<sup>48</sup> Appendix B: Tables B6.1; B6.1.1; B6.1.2.

necessary estate. Subsequent legislation also required potential Justices to take an oath of allegiance and supremacy in the Church of England.<sup>49</sup> Appointment to the Bench required that the magistrate also purchase a *Dedimus* before he could legally employ his commission.

Recruitment to the Commission of the Peace during this period in Dorset was in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant. Between 1790 and 1835 four men occupied this office in turn: Henry, Earl Digby (1771-1793); George, Lord Rivers (1793-1803); George, Earl of Dorchester (1803-1808) and Edward, Earl Digby (1808-1846).<sup>50</sup> John Cannon has argued that aristocratic monopoly of the Lord Lieutenancy explains in part the dominance of the aristocracy in the eighteenth century and beyond.<sup>51</sup> But his conclusion may confuse formal position with actual power. The evidence from Dorset suggests that this aristocratic monopoly to appoint men to the Commission of the Peace was diluted by the prolonged absences from the county of each Lord Lieutenant. As a result they had to rely on recommendations from other magistrates more familiar with the personalities and suitability of their brother landowners to act as justices. For instance, it was by no means unusual during the period of Digby's incumbency as Lord Lieutenant from 1808, for the owners of landed estates in Dorset to recommend themselves for appointment to the Commission of the Peace. Recommendations were submitted through Thomas Ffooks, the Clerk to the Commission. Ffooks was one of the premier solicitors in the county and represented Digby's personal and estate interests. He enjoyed the complete confidence of Digby and was influential in securing the appointment of

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<sup>49</sup> 25 Charles II, c.2, 1672.

<sup>50</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, p. xlv.

<sup>51</sup> J. Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: the peerage of eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 122-23.



individuals to the Commission of the Peace. For example, in October 1830, G.A. Templer was successful in soliciting Ffooks to include himself and his brother on the Commission of the Peace. Templer also sought (but was refused permission) to act for the Sherborne petty session division although he resided in Puddletown, part of the Dorchester division.<sup>52</sup> In November of the same year we find T.B. Hardwicke and Charles Bowles employing successfully the same tactics.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, this may also have been a necessary course of action given Digby's prolonged absences from the county. The separation of the aristocrat Digby from his social inferiors amongst the gentry is suggested by the confusions that sometimes accompanied appointments to the Commission. Perusing a list of hopefuls seeking appointment in 1831 Digby sought clarification from Ffooks on the spelling and composition of first and surnames. Carr Glyn, one of Sir Richard Carr Glyn's sons, caused particular confusion. Neither Digby nor Ffooks knew that Carr was in fact a first name and neither was aware of any familial relationship between Carr Glyn and Sir Richard. General John Michel was one of the most active magistrates in the county but neither Digby nor Ffooks knew the first names of his eldest son who sought inclusion on the bench. The reverend John Dowland's son was wrongly appointed to the Commission in 1830 as John James Goodden Dowland instead of John James Golden. As we may see from Appendix A, Digby was related by marriage to the Michels and Dowlands.<sup>54</sup> The comedy of errors continued and reverend John Fisher was appointed to the Commission in 1831 but wrongly designated Doctor John

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<sup>52</sup> D.R.O., D/FFO/12/142: Ffooks and Darlington Clients' Letters, 1821-1834. Letter, Templer to Ffooks, 23 October 1830.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* Letter, Hardwicke to Ffooks, 19 October 1830; Letter, Bowles to Ffooks, 8 November 1830.

<sup>54</sup> Appendix A.

Fisher and from the same list of nominations Ffooks was forced to contact a brother solicitor, John Bartlett, in order to obtain the correct spelling of Champness Fyler.<sup>55</sup>

Inclusion on the Commission of the Peace was sometimes extended to men who possessed useful professional qualifications. J.F Knight, who had provided invaluable services as surveyor, valuer and arbitrator to most of the Dorset ruling class in the late eighteenth century was appointed to the bench in the 1790s, almost by popular acclaim.<sup>56</sup> Popular opinion could as easily oppose appointments to the Commission of the Peace. For instance, according to Thomas Ffooks, Digby's appointment to the Commission of the two Elton brothers in the 1830's had been strongly (and unsuccessfully) opposed by some members of the Bench, and as strongly advocated by others. Unfortunately for later historians, Ffooks did not record the membership of these opposing factions. But two possible factors may have stimulated this division amongst the members of the Commission of the Peace. The Eltons had made their fortune from trade and were well known for their Whig political sympathies and their support for free trade and reforming the franchise. At a time when Grey's Whig administration was busily enacting free trade legislation, the Eltons outspoken support for reform may have made them unacceptable to certain Tory members of the Commission of the Peace. Their membership may also have been opposed on the grounds that their too active involvement in trade disbarred them from being regarded as gentlemen.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> D.R.O., D/FFO/12/142: Clients' Letters. Copy letter, Thomas Kite to Will Sherring, 22 October 1830; Letter, Fisher to Ffooks, 12 January 1831; Letter, Digby to Ffooks (n.d.) January 1831. D.R.O. D/FFO/1/1: Ffooks and Darlington, Out-Letters, 1830-1836. Letter Ffooks to Bartlett, 1 November 1830; Letter, Ffooks to Bartlett, (n.d.) January 1830.

<sup>56</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, [f.n.] (c), p. 165.

<sup>57</sup> D.R.O., D/FFO/1/1. Letter, Ffooks to Warry, 2 October 1834.



Trade was not invariably a bar to membership of the Commission of the Peace providing that commercial incomes were combined with the ownership of an estate and a country house, and that business men were not seen to be too publicly active in the management of a particular enterprise. We may see these criteria represented in the articles of the Norden Clay Company established in 1793 by John Calcraft and William Morton Pitt in partnership to supply china clay to the Staffordshire potteries and the Spode factory in Liverpool. ‘Mr Pitt and Mr Calcraft being both Gentlemen of Fortune, committed the intire management of the clay trade...to their agent Mr Barker Chiffney’.<sup>58</sup> In 1796, Calcraft leased his interest in the company to Chiffney for £500 per annum. Chiffney then entered secretly into partnership with one Richard Rivers a surgeon from Newcastle to secure a £2,000 loan against the company’s assets. The Company went into liquidation in 1802 when Pitt enforced bankruptcy proceedings against Chiffney because of defaults by the latter. On the bankruptcy of Chiffney, therefore, Rivers became the major creditor and Pitt and Calcraft were left with nothing from the business, although their reputations as gentlemen were presumably still intact. By 1806, however, Pitt was very far from being a gentleman of fortune. Five years after the Norden Clay Company failed in 1802, his coal mining ventures in Durham also foundered. He was forced to sell his principal country seat at Encombe in southern Dorset and retreat to a second home at Kingston Maurward in the parish of Bockhampton. The sale of Encombe to Lord Eldon realised 56,000 guineas, but after Pitt’s debts and mortgages were settled he was left with 6,000 guineas and a yearly rental income from the Bockhampton estate of £1153.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> D.R.O., D396/E93: Rivers Estate, Agreement, 1793.

<sup>59</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, p. 526; and D.R.O., D/FAR/1: Scott Estate, Sale Papers, 1807.

Income or substantial acres were always less important than residence in the county, energy and a knowledge of the law and Pitt's fall from economic grace neither curbed his activity on the Commission of the Peace, nor made his presence any the less acceptable to his brother magistrates. If anything the opposite was the case and his financial embarrassments forced his withdrawal from national politics and concentrated his activities on the county, where they were generally welcomed by the gentry. Other factors were also influential in deciding who to appoint as magistrates. The Bonds were a long established Dorset family but only came late into the Commission of the Peace after 1829, possibly because they were still tainted by the financial corruption and political embarrassment surrounding John Bond's activities as a parliamentary commissioner in the late seventeenth century. Possibly also because as succeeding generations of Bonds trained and practised as lawyers they centred their activities on the circuit courts and the Inns of Court in London.<sup>60</sup>

The Weld family, long established landowners who owned extensive property in western Dorset, also came late into the Commission of the Peace. As Dorset's premier Roman Catholic family they were disqualified from the magistracy until Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

The historiography has usually drawn a broad distinction between what has been termed the 'parish gentry' and the 'country gentry'. The former were men whose interests and powers were limited by their small property and lack of education. The latter were men of wealth and sophistication 'whose intellectual and political horizons began with the county but spread out to include the capital city of London'.<sup>61</sup> This broad distinction implied that activity within the commission of the

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<sup>60</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, p. 603.

<sup>61</sup> Stone and Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite?*, p. 6.



peace was predicted and delimited by the extent and geographical distribution of a magistrate's property and by his education. In practice, as we shall see below, the situation in Dorset was more complex.

Three hundred and twenty three men were already members of (or were appointed to) the Commission of the Peace between 1790 and 1835. Of this number, only some 179 men took an active role as magistrates.<sup>62</sup> Active membership of the Commission of the Peace had expanded dramatically during this period. From 51 at the end of the eighteenth century it almost doubled in size during the next forty years to reach 90 by 1835.<sup>63</sup> The reasons for this expansion were broadly speaking a function of two factors: one socio/biological and the other tactical/political. Most of the increase is accounted for by the increasing number of sons born within the marriages of existing magistrate who were appointed to the bench because of their family connection. The incorporation of other magistrates reflected the temporary exigencies of short term crises like the war period when the majority of clerical magistrates were appointed to fill the gap caused by absenteeism. It may also have represented a longer term strategy to grant a share in governing the county to as many men as possible in order to manage the increasing burden of governing rural society. The proportion of active clerical magistrates increased from 60 per cent to almost 80 per cent between 1790 and 1820 and they formed the largest single occupational grouping within the Commission of the Peace until about 1830, from which time their numbers declined as a proportion of all active magistrates.<sup>64</sup> In contrast, magistrates who were engaged solely or principally in the management of

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<sup>62</sup> Appendix A: Tables A1.1 and A1.2. Appendix B: Tables B3.1, B3.1.1, B4.2.1, B4.3.1, B4.4.1, B4.5.1.

<sup>63</sup> Appendix B: Tables B4.1, B4.1.1, B4.1.2 and B4.5, B4.5.1, B4.5.2.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* Table B5.1.

their own estates and who consequently looked mostly to the county as their sphere of activity, only gradually increased as a proportion of the total from 35 per cent in 1790 to 37 per cent in 1835.<sup>65</sup> The gentry magistrates who were also engaged wholly or partly in the professions, politics or commerce comprised almost one-half of the commission of the peace by 1810 from which high point their numbers declined until 1830, rising thereafter to reach again almost one-half by 1835.<sup>66</sup>

Fifty six magistrates were active at quarter and petty sessions in the period 1790-99. However, only twenty eight men regularly attended quarter sessions so that the government of the county was effectively in the hands of a minority of the gentry and their allies.<sup>67</sup> A closer inspection of the distribution and levels of attendance reveals an inner cadre of six magistrates who dominated the government of the county at quarter sessions during this period. They were Francis Browne, John Browne (cousins), Thomas Pickard, James Frampton, William Toogood and William Morton Pitt.<sup>68</sup> The last three mentioned attended university. The Brownes apart, none of the others were related directly or indirectly by marriage.<sup>69</sup> These men together occupied twelve of the known twenty eight places in the system of committees established during this period. Each of these six men were also active at petty sessions but only William Toogood was amongst the fraction of magistrates who were most active at petty sessions.<sup>70</sup>

Fifty nine magistrates attended at various times the meetings of the petty and quarter sessions in the period 1800-09.<sup>71</sup> However, sixteen magistrates effectively

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables: B4.1, B4.1.1, B4.1.2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Table: B10.2.

<sup>69</sup> Appendix A: Table A1.1

<sup>70</sup> Appendix B: Tables B9.1, B10.1.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B4.2, B4.2.1, B4.2.2.



dominated the activities of the Commission by virtue of their regular attendance at the different Sessions, so that the government of the county was still in the hands of a minority of the gentry and their allies.<sup>72</sup> Ten magistrates, only, monopolised the government of the county at quarter sessions. Six of them had dominated quarter session in the earlier period and they were joined by Edward Berkeley Portman and three clergymen, John Dowland, William England (Archdeacon of Dorset) and Samuel Howe. We may also see that these men together occupied eleven of the known seventeen places in the system of committees established during this period. All but Portman were among the active magistrates at petty sessions but only Frampton was amongst the fraction of magistrates who were the most active at petty sessions.<sup>73</sup>

Sixty two magistrates were active in the Commission of the Peace during the period 1810-19.<sup>74</sup> The government of the county was effectively in the hands of a minority of the gentry and their allies. Forty eight of them attended university and the majority went to Oxford.<sup>75</sup> Once again, a minority (eighteen) of the active magistrates monopolised power during this period. Ten of the eighteen had dominated quarter session in the earlier period and they were joined by John James Farquharson, Henry Seymer and the clergyman, Harry Farr Yeatman. Nine of these men attended university and together they occupied three of the known five places in the system of committees established during this period. All but Toogood, Pickard and Farquharson were active at petty sessions and James Herbert Browne, James

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B10.1, B10.2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B9.1, B10.1, B10.2.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B4.3, B4.3.1, B4.3.2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Frampton, William Morton Pitt, John Dowland and William England were among the most active magistrates at petty sessions.<sup>76</sup>

In 1825 quarter sessions ceased to be rotated and were centralised at Dorchester. The total of active magistrates rose slightly to sixty five but the government of the county was effectively still in the hands of a minority of the gentry and their allies.<sup>77</sup> The same cadre of most active magistrates who had governed the county from 1810 remained in place and together these men occupied fourteen of the known sixty five places in the system of committees.<sup>78</sup> This dilution of their power may be more apparent than real because these magistrates occupied one half of the places on the four committees (Public Accounts, Finance, Gaol and Treasurers) which supervised county expenditure.<sup>79</sup> All but Pickard and Dowland were active at petty sessions and J.H. Browne, James Frampton, W.M. Pitt, were among the most active magistrates at petty sessions.<sup>80</sup>

From 1830, however, and for the first time since 1790, there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of magistrates who formed the inner cadre of most active magistrates. Fifteen new men joined the fraction of the six surviving magistrates who had come to monopolise power since 1810 and twenty one men now monopolised power on the Commission of the Peace.<sup>81</sup> Unfortunately there are too few data on the committees in this period to draw any meaningful conclusions. Of the fifteen new men, George Bankes, Henry Frampton, Harry Farr Yeatman junior and John Fyler were the sons of men who had been earlier appointed to the

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B9.1, B10.1, B10.2.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B4.4, B4.4.1, B4.4.2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, Table B9.1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables B9.1, B10.1, B10.2.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*



Commission of the Peace.<sup>82</sup> Humphrey Weld came from a well established Roman Catholic family of landowners which had been disbarred from the Commission until the Emancipation of Catholics in 1829. Thomas Bower and George Jacob had already been active on the Commission and were appointed in 1819 and 1824. The remainder of the new men had been appointed during the 1830's.<sup>83</sup>

The patterns and distribution of attendances at petty and quarter sessions suggest that we need to redefine the traditional model of county government which assumes a division in the Commission of the Peace between the so-called county gentry, the large landowners and others who dominate the quarter sessions, and a fraction of smaller owners of capital, for instance smaller landowners, large farmers, the clergy who manage the day to day affairs of the parish at the level of the petty sessions. However true this dichotomy may be of the distribution of power in other counties, it clearly does not represent the situation in Dorset. In Dorset, magistrates may be distinguished by their relative rates of activity at petty or quarter sessions. As the data demonstrate, a large number of the same magistrates was active at both petty and quarter sessions. But within this group of magistrates is a much smaller fraction who by reason of their attendances and membership of the committees can be said to have dominated the government of Dorset. This most active fraction of magistrates begins to form from about 1810 and these men dominate county government at petty sessions and quarter sessions for the next twenty years. Their energy secures the centralising of quarter sessions in 1825 and the restructuring of petty sessions divisions in 1829. Only old age and death loosens their grip on power. From about

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<sup>82</sup> Appendix A: Tables A1.1, A1.2.

<sup>83</sup> Appendix B: Tables B4.3.2, B4.4.2, B4.5, B4.5.1, B4.5.2.

1830 a new inner cadre of active magistrates begins to appear. The division of the Dorset Commission of the Peace is between active and most active magistrates.

From the 1790s a series of administrative measures were undertaken to reconstruct the civil administration of Dorset. They were put in place by the active magistracy which began to monopolise power in the county. Their anxieties to reform the structures of county government related to the internal and external pressures that are discussed in chapter five.<sup>84</sup>

In 1824 the active magistrates at the Dorchester General Sessions mooted the idea of ending the rotation of General Sessions between Dorchester, Bridport, Shaftesbury, Sherborne and Blandford. In future they proposed that Sessions should be held four times a year at Dorchester. To prepare a simple narrative of this event is straightforward. The General Sessions minutes books record the names of the magistrates who attended sessions on the relevant dates and the time which elapsed between the proposal and its adoption. To offer a considered analysis is, however, almost impossible. The General Sessions minutes books and the Clerk to the Justices minutes are silent as to the motives of the men who made the proposal and they do not identify the magistrates who supported or opposed the measure. Apart from one brief commentary against the proposal printed in the *Dorset County Chronicle* on 14 March 1825, the immediate context of reform has been lost to historical knowledge.

Political oeconomy had constituted petty sessions divisions as federations of households governed to particular purposes by individual patriarchs. Any benefits which accrued from these private arrangements to the stock of county wealth were

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<sup>84</sup> Chapter five.



purely fortuitous, and indeed, these private arrangements had come to be seen as a drain on the county's resources. The petty sessions boundaries had been defined by reference to the older hundred divisions in Dorset. As a consequence, not all of the parishes which comprised a particular division were contiguous and some actually lay outside of divisional boundaries. The divisions were centred upon and managed from the principle market town in each division. But Shaftesbury East petty sessions also encompassed the thriving market town of Wimborne and Blandford South, the sea-port and market town of Wareham. The suggested reforms to the boundaries of the nine petty session divisions were ordered by reference to markets rather than households.<sup>85</sup> In 1829 the active magistrates of the Dorchester division suggested the reform of petty sessions divisions believing that: 'a general new arrangement of all Divisions is preferable to any partial alteration of the boundary of any particular Division and that such a partial arrangement would not be productive of the reciprocal advantages which each Division may expect'.<sup>86</sup> However, the devil was in the detail and the suggestion to redraw petty session boundaries came up hard against the fact that the existing boundaries were themselves uncertain and any expectations that boundaries would be simply redrawn were disappointed. As the minutes of the meeting record:

It is not expedient to proceed to the simple consideration of such statement but instead thereof it is ordered in pursuance of the 7th. section of [9 George IV] that an enquiry and examination be made with the boundary line and

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<sup>85</sup> D.R.O., QSM 1/16, 13 January 1829.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

extent of all the existing and accustomed Divisions for the holding of special sessions.<sup>87</sup>

The new Divisions came into effect on 1 September 1830 but only after the interested parties in some parishes had appealed to be placed in a division of their choosing. Thus Spetisbury was taken from its old division of Shaftesbury East (redesignated as the Wimborne division in the 1830 reforms) and placed within the division of Blandford North. An appeal against the move was lodged but dismissed. However, West Morden successfully appealed to be removed from the new division of Wareham and placed within the boundaries of the Wimborne division because its inhabitants invariably attended the market there. Likewise Todbere was transferred to the Shaftesbury division and Halstock removed from Sherborne to be placed within the Bridport division to take advantage of its more convenient market.<sup>88</sup>

The gentry also constituted themselves in their role as magistrates as objects of knowledge. A series of permanent and *ad hoc* committees responsible to monitor and regulate the major areas of county expenditure was established during the 1790s. These committees produced annual statements of accounts which were published and open to public inspection. They also provided a forum in which selected members of the ruling class could represent the interests of their divisions and regulate expenditure on agreed objects by majority decision. The committees' records are incomplete but they suggest that they were only intermittently successful. Their lack of success may be traced to two factors. First, the decision of any one committee was not binding on another and second, cross membership between the different committees was limited and the whole system was therefore prone to

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 April 1829.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 May 1829.



reproduce the same sorts of divisions and conflicts experienced within and between the petty and general sessions. The nominally important Finance Committee, for example, had the power only to generally oversee expenditure and not to regulate it. As a result the Gaol Committee, which managed an inherently expensive part of county government, had little external regulation to help manage its expenditure. It may be significant that the general reform of petty session boundaries which came into effect in 1830 was also accompanied by a reform which threw open membership of the committees to any magistrate.

In January 1792, an *ad hoc* Committee for the Public (County) Accounts was established to inspect expenditure for the previous three years, in order to produce a statistical account against which future expenditure and economies might be estimated.<sup>89</sup> In the same year the allowances paid to magistrates for their attendance at county business also came under scrutiny with a table of allowances for specific duties established and transmitted to all acting magistrates.<sup>90</sup> The education of the Magistrates' in the proper exercise of their duties continued apace. In particular they were instructed to specify in their commitments of offenders whether or not the offence was to be tried at the Assizes or quarter sessions. This obviated the expensive and embarrassing situation in which prisoners brought before judges at Assizes were discharged because prosecutors and witnesses had not been told to appear and had assumed the offence was to come before quarter sessions.<sup>91</sup> The control of county expenditure was further extended in 1797 when committees were established to examine the Treasurer's accounts and gaol accounts.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> D.R.O., QSM 3/11, 1 January 1792.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 October 1792.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 and 16 July 1794.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 July; 16 September 1797.

One of the greatest areas of expenditure to the County accounts was the repair and maintenance of bridges. In fact a single justice could order works to be undertaken and charged against the county rate rather than a divisional or parish account. This state of affairs was challenged in 1801 by an order that no single justice could commit the county to any expenditure without producing an estimate of the expenses of the work required. The estimate was not to be exceeded and a committee was appointed with the sole power to authorise the repair and maintenance of county bridges.<sup>93</sup> The scope for co-operation and establishing a common governing purpose was limited by the existence of the separate divisional structures which effectively served to stimulate individual activity and interrupt collective responsibility. Parliamentary legislation allowed every magistrate in England ‘upon his own view’ the power in law to order expenditure against the county rate.<sup>94</sup> Regulating the powers of divisions in relation to one another and to the county depended, therefore, on the sacrifice of considerable autonomy on the part of individual magistrates. The surviving records of the General Sessions indicate that on different occasions some magistrates were unwilling to sacrifice their lawfully sanctioned autonomy. As late as 1827 the magistrates assembled at quarter sessions in Dorchester ordered ‘that it be understood in future that any magistrate who takes upon himself to present or indict any county bridge without previous communication with the Court of Quarter Sessions, and receiving its instructions, be liable for every expense attending such proceeding’.<sup>95</sup> This resolution was legally unenforceable, as its framers must have known, because the power of an individual magistrate to order

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<sup>93</sup> D.R.O., QSM 3/12, 13 January 1801.

<sup>94</sup> 13 George III, c. 78.

<sup>95</sup> D.R.O., QSM 1/16, 16 October 1827.



expenditure against the county rate was enshrined in parliamentary legislation. It was this separation that finally forced the issue of centralising quarter sessions in 1825.

Centralising quarter sessions at Dorchester in 1825 was followed by an alteration to the membership and duration of the committees. From 1826 committees were appointed annually at the Epiphany Sessions in January and each petty sessions division was represented by two members. The Bridge and Building Committee was the exception to this practice. The divisions of Sturminster, Blandford North and Shaftesbury were permitted three members each to reflect their responsibility for the greater number of county buildings and bridges.<sup>96</sup> The reformed constitutions of the committees stipulated that business could not proceed unless three members were present. They were to superintend the building or repair of every bridge and building and county roads at the ends of county bridges. All plans of building or repair had to be submitted to the inspection and consideration of magistrates at quarter sessions. And no bills were to be paid until two magistrates on the committee and in whose district the work was due agreed the work had been carried out satisfactorily. The Chairman alone had the power (or a magistrate appointed by him) to sign cheques for payment. The Chairman of the quarter sessions was an ex-officio member of each committee. Each committee had to report to quarter sessions once a year at the Midsummer Sessions and report on the state of bridges, buildings and roads. If any member refused to act or died the vacancy would be filled by a magistrate from the petty session division to which such magistrates

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<sup>96</sup> *Index to the County records in the Record Room at the County Offices and (where stated) at the Shire Hall Dorchester*, compiled by A.C. Cox (Hereafter *Cox's Index*), p. 5., Minutes of the Bridge and Building Committee, vol. I, 1826-65, 10 January 1826.

belonged. In the case of illness or other temporary absences, the absent justice was able to nominate a temporary replacement from his division.<sup>97</sup>

In October 1827 the Finance Committee reported to quarter sessions that they were dismayed to find that several bills work on bridges had been paid under the order of the quarter sessions but without being examined by the Bridge Committee, 'they earnestly hope the Court will agree with them in thinking inconvenient except in special circumstances'.<sup>98</sup> The powerful Finance Committee had oversight of all county expenditure and thus the task of supervising the active magistrates on the Commission of the Peace.

Throwing open the different committees to general membership in 1830 may be hypothesised as the active magistrates' confidence in their construction of Dorset as a unitary political and economic terrain which promoted industry and wealth by reference to natural laws and markets. This identity of Dorset was reconstructed as a region beyond Steuart's and Smith's notions of self-supporting labour where civil individuality was established and confirmed only within metaphors of familial, household relationships. The gentry now identified Dorset as a unitary region of markets which constituted order and wealth and humanity within a rational exchange of labour. The localism of the patriarchal household and the ends of the knowledge of subsistence, wealth and order it produced was exchanged for the sphere of the knowledge of labour, industry and free contracts.

The unfettered discretion of magistrates to act (in their own divisions) singly, in pairs or as a body on the Commission of the Peace was increasingly called into question in Dorset during this period, both by non-magistrates and from within the

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> D.R.O. QSM 1/16, 15 October 1827.



Commission of the Peace itself. The consequences of this questioning was a committee system and the reforms to the structures and boundaries of the petty sessions and quarter sessions. These structural reforms had some impact on the governing conduct of some magistrates but to impose really effective control of an individual magistrate's discretion to act required the intervention of central government. During the so-called 'eight iconoclastic years' between 1828 and 1835 it was the power of the state which effectively confirmed Dorset as a unitary legislative terrain.<sup>99</sup> By the Licensing Act of 1828, Brewster Sessions lost its power of requiring a good character from potential applicants for a liquor license and its right to refuse the renewal of existing licences was made subject to appeal at quarter sessions.<sup>100</sup> Central interference in magistrates' discretion in matters of liquor licensing, and thus of consumption and by extension the 'manners of the poor', was further extended in 1830, when the Beer Act permitted any ratepayer to open an alehouse without any licence, merely on payment of two guineas to the local office of excise.<sup>101</sup> And within ten years 826 outlets were supplying alcohol for sale in the county.<sup>102</sup> Three years after the passage of these Acts most of the Dorset magistrates who responded to the town and rural queries circulated by the Royal Commission on the Poor laws argued that the circumscription of their discretion in this area had been partly responsible for the violence and destruction of the Swing conflict, and the magistrates of the Bridport, Dorchester and Shaftesbury petty session divisions

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<sup>99</sup> Webb and Webb, *English Local Government*, p. 603.

<sup>100</sup> 9 George IV, c. 61.

<sup>101</sup> 11 George IV & 1 William IV, c. 64.

<sup>102</sup> *P.P.*, A Return of the Rental of the Houses occupied by Publicans and Licensed Sellers of Beer (1839, XXX), p. 439.



petitioned parliament for the repeal of the Act.<sup>103</sup> Hobhouse's Act of 1831 and the Factory Act of 1833 removed the right that magistrates had enjoyed since 1802 to inspect factories, and transferred powers of inspection to Home Office appointed inspectors. Although transgressions of the Acts were still tried locally by magistrates at petty sessions, magistrates no longer enjoyed any discretionary powers in the matter, and prosecuted offenders at the direction of the factory inspector. Central control and direction was extended further in 1833 by the Lighting and Watching Act and the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834.<sup>104</sup> Reform of highway administration in 1835<sup>105</sup> was actually sponsored by Dorset magistrate E.B. Portman and represented his, and others, solution to the internecine struggles on the Dorset bench over the adverse political and economic consequences to the county of what had often been in practice a corrupt and expensive method of subsidising farm labour.<sup>106</sup> Magistrates could no longer appoint surveyors and the practice of stopping up footpaths, for long a source of irritation between landowners and inconvenience to the general public, depended upon the decision of a jury in open court. Finally, in 1835, the Prison Act made the administration of all gaols subject to rules framed by the Home Secretary and Government Inspectors.<sup>107</sup>

The active magistrates operated within definite institutional structures of power. The potential fractures within the gentry suggested by the data on occupations and marriage represented a broad division between two cultural ideals and reality. The two cultural traditions reflected their competing constructions of society and these

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<sup>103</sup> Collection of Indexes to the *British Sessional Papers*, Index to Petitions, 1833-1852, Petitions for Repeal or Alteration of the Beer Act, 1833: No. 467 (Bridport); No. 511 (Dorchester); No. 1500 (Shaftesbury).

<sup>104</sup> 3 & 4 William IV, c. 90.

<sup>105</sup> 5 & 6 William IV, c. 50.

<sup>106</sup> *Hansard* (Third Series), vol. 15 (1835), pp. 1144-45.

<sup>107</sup> 5 & 6 William IV, c. 38.



are discussed in detail in chapters three, four and five. One tradition stressed, custom and the discretionary freedom of the gentry to actively regulate the economic life of the parish and the county; the other, personal responsibility, moral reformation and the primacy of contractual economic relations supervised by the gentry but governed by 'natural laws'. These different traditions represented a tension between oeconomy and economy. The discourse of oeconomy defined the household (that is parishes or collections of parishes comprising divisions) as autonomous units of stewardship in which economic operation was conceived in terms of domestic finance. As Bruland and Smith put it, 'households of the oeconomy trade with each other, realising circulatory gains in so far as they can buy cheap and sell dear'.<sup>108</sup> The emerging idea of Dorset as a unitary economy trading in a regional and national economy repudiated the substantive ideas of domestic finance but retained many of the rhetorical terms of patriarchal oeconomy. As we will see in chapter five agricultural production in Dorset was geared to the demands of an integrated regional market which encompassed the whole of the south and south-west of England.<sup>109</sup> In particular, the variations in grain prices in the county were closely synchronised with those of London. Dorset commentators during this period began to construct an identity of the county as a unitary political/geographical terrain in a framework of regional, perhaps national differentiation. This framework showed that the county was threatened by the activities of a centralising state, external competition, and the political economy of influential theories of the market and free trade. The identity of Dorset as a unitary terrain emerged in opposition to

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<sup>108</sup> T. Bruland and K. Smith, 'Economic discourse and the capitalist order', *Ec&Soc.*, 10 (1981), p. 475.

<sup>109</sup> Chapter five.

ideas of the patriarchal household and was influential in remodelling the structures and institutions of the Commission of the Peace. These identities and threats, and the reform of county government were so interlinked they may be regarded as determinative of, yet irreducible to, one another.

By 1830 the constitution of Dorset as a federation of patriarchal households possessed of certain common economic notions of stewardship had been vitiated as a model for county government both by the gentry and the activities of a powerful centralising state. However, the tensions between the idea of the county as a collectivity of patriarchal parish systems and the idea of the county as a unitary rational, economical whole were inscribed in other terms within their self-identities as the governors of rural Dorset. They were the terms of unchangeable constancy which had been historically inscribed within the identity of Dorset in opposition to the very metropolitan cultural and political powers represented by the activities of an increasingly centralising state. Here was the conundrum facing the gentry. The power of central government could achieve directly what the reorganisations of the Commission of the Peace had attempted to solve indirectly. The power of central government could never be a solution, however, because it directly contradicted the very identities of the gentry. The solution to the problem of order could only be discovered locally. It would be to incorporate the terms of a rational discourse of political economy/civil administration within the terms of patriarchal authority. The identity of Dorset as unitary terrain of government overseeing among other things the gentry's rationally defined market territories was built upon a theoretical conception of the improvement of its economy as in some degree dependent upon the competence of economic stewardship of a unitary legislative authority. While



the constitution of Dorset as a unitary terrain of government was suggested by a new theoretical conception of what I have termed economic stewardship, the reformed structures of county government also suggest that the gentry made in themselves new objects of knowledge and supervision. The aim of the next chapter is to examine the various means by which it was possible in the discourse of the common rules of social life to identify and justify the origins of governing purpose in the terms of the gentry's own self-identities.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *From Patriarchs to Paternalists: Gentry identities and the 'Common Rules of Social Life'*

The gentry's self-identities were constructed in the terms of two contrasting discourses: the discourse of paternalist political economy, with its emphasis on the 'natural law' of supply and demand and individual striving, and the discourse of patriarchal oeconomy with its ideas of stewardship, obedience, moral rights and subsistence. The former discourse opened up a vista of improving farming and profits but its terms were also shared by utilitarian radicalism, atheism and republicanism. It therefore challenged gentry privileges in religious, political and civil law. The latter discourse justified the gentry's power, property and privileges as a service to the poor. At the same time it threatened their profits and the security of rural society by apparently encouraging the growth in the numbers of a disaffected, demoralised and work shy labouring population dependent for their subsistence on the poor rates. These threats and challenges were constructed by the gentry in the terms of an all pervasive moral crisis. This crisis exemplified the tension between the gentry's absolute need, as they saw it, to retain the privileges that secured their property and their desires to improve farming and thus enlarge their profits. The tensions between the gentry's needs and desires assisted them to reconstruct self-identities and this process will be exemplified in an exploration of some of the different works which were produced in Dorset during this period. These works cover a spectrum of discourses from the Romantic Toryism of Kenelm Digby, through the rationalism and liberalism of John Penny and William Colfox, to



the radical republicanism and utilitarianism of Richard Hassall. This chapter will now explore what these discourses and their proponents can tell us about historical practice and formative social narratives; in particular, the ways in which language constitutes meaning. It may then be possible to begin to move beyond the imaginary interpretations of many of the histories of eighteenth and nineteenth century Dorset to a new understanding of the identity and governing purpose of the gentry.

As we have seen in chapter two, gentry power in Dorset was exercised through the structures of the Commission of the Peace by a loose coalition of active magistrates. This coalition comprised great landowners, wealthy and pluralist clergy, professional men such as lawyers and even commercial men like ship-owners and bankers. This complex reality of interests was inscribed within and defined by contradictory systems of discourse, all of which were present in Dorset by 1790. The discourse of class in political economy which identified and defined the social and economic roles of landowners, farmers and labourers; the discourse of patriarchal obligation which described the familial relationships of the household in terms of the stewardship(responsibility) of the rich and the subordination and obedience of the poor; the discourse of gentlemanly conduct which reinterpreted the patriarchal obligations of the rich in terms of Christianised culture; and the discourses of economic and material paternalism which described the older patriarchal social contract between magistrates, farmers and the labouring poor in terms of human nature and the market. The gentry juggled uneasily with contradictory terms of discourse, thinking of themselves, at least in times of tension, as a class with interests over and against the farmer and the labourer, but reluctant to define themselves essentially in this language, which was seen as a foreign intrusion

from the urban/industrial complex. Nevertheless, the three-tier language of class in political economy was coming to dominate the ways in which the gentry viewed themselves and their world. The 'science' of political economy and its class structure was better able to classify the population in terms of its power over means of production. Its great mobilising strength was also its greatest weakness. The weakness of identifying landlords, farmers and labourers in the class terms of political economy lay in its ignoring or denying the verbal and other systems within which people thought of themselves. As a result, a tension between class and culture was enshrined in the heart of gentry identity, a tension which would be differently constituted and articulated at different times.

The salient fact of eighteenth century Dorset was that its rural capitalist economies were organised within political arrangements which appeared traditional and were represented as immemorial by the gentry. As Fred Reid has shown, this appearance of tradition, permanence and stability was buttressed by organic concepts of oeconomy which granted privileges and obligations to patriarchal gentry heads of households and parishes as a static system of estates.<sup>1</sup> Inevitably, however, changes in the character and dynamics of capitalist organisation developed a tension in the relation between the new terms of capitalist political economy and their organisation and representation within traditional political forms of oeconomy. As Hobsbawm and Rude put it:

A fundamental contradiction lay at the heart English agrarian society in the period of the Industrial Revolution. Its rulers wanted it to be both capitalist and stable, traditionalist and hierarchical. In other words they wanted it to

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<sup>1</sup> F. Reid, 'Art and Ideology in Far from the Madding Crowd', *T.H.A.*, 4 (1986), p. 97.



be governed by the universal free market of the liberal economist (which was inevitably a market for land and men as well as for goods), but only to the extent that suited nobles, squires and farmers.<sup>2</sup>

Hobsbawm and Rude overstate the case when they describe these tensions as ‘a fundamental contradiction’. There was no simple divide between exponents of custom and tradition (oeconomy) on the one hand and those who employed the philosophical principles of the free market espoused by political economy on the other. Exponents of oeconomy and economy associated their beliefs as the nature of things and both justified the nature of things by reference to Christian theodicy. Indeed, both Peter Laslett and J.C.D. Clark have separately described Christian belief in eighteenth century England as almost universal. Clark identified this belief with a discourse that called attention to ‘the history of a chosen nation’.<sup>3</sup> This nation was ‘conceived as a family or group of families, with a Holy family as its culmination...Allied with Christian symbolism, familial status was another of the symbolic elements which, in so poor a society, enabled ‘a minority to live for all the rest’.<sup>4</sup> The conundrum facing the gentry in Dorset was how as Christian gentlemen they were to negotiate and reconcile the distinction between oeconomy and economy and ‘live for all the rest’. The problem for them was not that the discourse of political economy was any less Godly or Christian than the other, but that it directly attacked privileges which upholders of patriarchal discourses had long enjoyed and which were increasingly difficult to defend because they were represented as conflicting with the ‘natural’ order of market ‘laws’. I want now to explore the

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<sup>2</sup> E. Hobsbawm and G. Rude, *Captain Swing: A social history of the great English agricultural uprising of 1830* (1985), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47; and P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost Further Explored* (1983), p. 52.

gentry's proposed solutions to this conundrum and the ways in which they impacted on the government of the county in general and the governing of the poor in particular.

The discourse of oeconomy which granted privileges and obligations to patriarchal heads of households and parishes as a static system of estates preached familial relationships. Peter Laslett has demonstrated how this discourse and its doctrine of stewardship and submission was derived from the Bible and required the continuing and active presence of a Divine Providence. This discourse of stewardship and obedience had a long history and was most powerfully articulated in the seventeenth century. This articulation can be clearly seen in the elaborate ceremonies and celebrations which accompanied the rebuilding of some of the great gentry houses in Dorset. Sir John Strode, younger son of the family seated at Parnham, was a successful London lawyer who bought estates in Dorset to refound his family's fortunes. He was a godly man who as Member of Parliament for Bridport drew up an Act against profane cursing and swearing. He left us his own manuscript account of the rebuilding of Chantmarle in 1612 in which he placed overwhelming emphasis upon his pious motives.<sup>5</sup> The old manor house, he explained, had decoration derived from the symbolism of Solomon's Temple 'sun, moone, starrs, *cherubims*, doves, grapes and pomegranates, all supported by 4 angells in the 4 corners of the roofe'. The psalms and lessons that were sung at the service of dedication by the Bishop of Bristol in September 1619 make it clear that Sir John Strode saw himself following the example of the Jewish patriarch King David. The following extract

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<sup>5</sup> J. Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset* (Blandford, 1874), vol. 4, p. 5-7



from one of the Psalms sung by the congregation at the service of dedication, illustrates the point:

Lorde, remember David with all his affliction Who sware unto the Lorde,  
and vowed unto the mightie God of Jacob, saying, I will not enter into the  
Tabernacle of mine house, nor come upon my pallett or bed, nor suffer mine  
eyes to sleepe nor mine eyelids to slumber, until I finde out a place for the  
Lorde, an habitation for the mightie God of Jacob.

The blessing from Psalm sixty-two shows Strode drawing a parallel between his house and household and the heavenly city: ‘Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: let them prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.’ One might infer that, as the patriarch of his own estate, Strode saw himself aspiring to imitate the conduct of King David, one of the greatest of the Old Testament patriarchs.<sup>6</sup>

Hutchins records how the service of dedication was attended also by the Dorset county gentry and 400-500 other people who participated in a ceremonial observance of housekeeping and hospitality. The gentry and others of good quality were feasted in the new house while ‘the poor had bread and meate at the doores’. Strode exercised his duties to the poor throughout his life; duties which enabled him to imitate the precepts of the Old Testament patriarchs and in 1630 he endowed almshouses for six poor people, which were inscribed:

God’s House  
Sit honos Trino Deo  
Ano Dom.  
1630.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

The Bible was the most usual source of the patriarchal ideal. If individual landowners identified themselves by reference to the Bible then it was a common place of orthodox political theory that the self-image of the state was also derived from Biblical authority. Exploring the origins and blessings of the English constitutional monarchy, Bishop George Horne had no doubt that:

he who is God of peace and order provided for the establishment and continuation of these blessings among mankind, by ordaining, first in the case of Adam, and then again in Noah, that the human race should spring from one common parent.<sup>8</sup>

The New Testament was also replete with justifications for the British Constitution in terms of patriarchy. As Clark has shown, the verses of 1 Peter 2: 13-17, Romans 13: 1 Timothy 2: 1-3 and 2 Peter 2: 9-10, were frequently cited by contemporaries to illustrate and justify the origins of civil society.<sup>9</sup> Patriarchy and the patriarchal system also found expression in works of Civic Humanism, political systems, and constitutional law. These might be loosely defined as works of the ‘patriarchy of the state’.<sup>10</sup> They included works by the Dorset landowner the third Earl Shaftesbury whose *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, which was originally published in 1696, went through nine editions by 1749.<sup>11</sup> Bolingbroke’s *Patriot King* which ‘enjoyed a considerable vogue throughout the reign, of George III and...William IV [was to be ] found quoting it during the Reform Bill Crisis’. Bolingbroke argued that patriarchal relations went hand in hand with freedom: ‘The true image of a free people, governed by a Patriot King, is that of a patriarchal

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in, Clark, *English Society*, pp. 295-96.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>11</sup> R.S. Neale, *Writing Marxist History. British Society, Economy and Culture since 1700* (Oxford, 1988), p. 52.



family, where the head and all the members are united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit.’<sup>12</sup> This emphasis on the family as the source of an original unity may also be found in Blackstone’s *Commentaries*. Originally published between 1765 and 1769, they were still a part of a common intellectual currency after his death in 1780.<sup>13</sup> Blackstone used the authority of the Bible to argue against the contractual origins of the state. He wrote:

This notion, of an actually existing unconnected state of nature, is too wild to be seriously admitted; and besides is plainly contradictory to the revealed accounts of the primitive origins of mankind (i.e. Adam and Eve), and their preservation two thousand years afterwards (i.e. by Noah); both of which were effected by the means of the single family.<sup>14</sup>

Concepts of the patriarchal household also defined the poor and influenced changing perceptions of poverty. The poor were defined by the patriarchal discourse as a category to be manipulated in order to guarantee their subsistence and preserve their capacity to labour and thus to create wealth. At the centre of the idea of the patriarchal household then were the policies implemented through time to deal with the Poor and their subsistence. The Poor Law of 1597-98 replaced the previous voluntary system of poor relief. It introduced for the first time the power when necessary to levy a direct and compulsory poor rate on every householder in the parish. The poor laws would become a discursive system of power for allocating the different members of the patriarchal household to categories of reward and punishment. As Laslett has shown, in the terms of Christian religion obedience to

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>13</sup> Clark, *English Society*, pp. 182, 208.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.



the head of a household and submission to the powers that be was guaranteed by the fear of a wrathful God who could damn for ever the souls of the defiant. ‘Short life’, as the Bishop of Ely William Fleetwood put it, ‘was the punishment for disobedient children’.<sup>15</sup> Recent research on the poor laws by Hitchcock, Shoemaker and Davison has demonstrated how ideas of a just punishment for ‘disobedient children’ were translated in the seventeenth century such that the poor were seen as a category of children on which discipline could act directly.<sup>16</sup> The poor laws had always contained clauses which enabled its administrators to act directly to punish or discipline the poor. As Paul Slack has argued, after the middle of the seventeenth century contemporaries looked to employ ‘indoor, institutional means of controlling and disciplining the pauper population rather than seeking to manipulate and exploit already existing structures of parochial relief for that purpose’.<sup>17</sup> This was not simply to punish but to discipline the poor in order to reform and correct characters. This ‘just measure of pain’, to paraphrase Ignatieff, demonstrated a partial break with the concerns to maintain the subsistence of the poor, to include a concern with discipline, rewards and punishment directed to reform and correct behaviour.<sup>18</sup> To be poor and particularly to lack work, could now be defined as a moral disorder. These changes to attitudes and perceptions towards the poor were part of a wider process which Foucault has termed ‘The Great Confinement’; a general European movement to employ an ethical power of segregation against the poor, the criminal

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<sup>15</sup> Laslett, *The World We have Lost Further Explored*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>16</sup> R.B. Shoemaker, ‘Prosecution and Punishment’ and T. Hitchcock, ‘Paupers and Preachers; The SPCK and the Parochial Workhouse Movement’, in L. Dawson, *et.al.* (eds) *Stilling the Grumbling Hive. The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750* (Stroud, 1992), pp. 238-72. T. Hitchcock *et. al.* (eds) *The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840* (1997), pp. 145-66.

<sup>17</sup> P. Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (1993), p. 205.

<sup>18</sup> M. Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution 1750 -1850* (1978), pp. 168, 175-77, 184-5.



and the insane.<sup>19</sup> The animating power of this moral perception is made clear in a report of the Board of Trade. In proposing the means 'to render [the poor] useful to the public,' it was made quite clear that the origin of poverty was neither scarcity of commodities nor unemployment, but 'the weakening of discipline and the relaxation of morals'.<sup>20</sup> To the editor of the *Dorset County Chronicle* the consequences of a relaxation of morals was most obviously to be seen in the dependency of the county's agricultural labourers on the poor rates. He wrote:

There is no reason either in politics or in morals why a labourer should feel any degradation in receiving his hire. On the contrary, the manly feeling of honest independence is one of the best rewards of his toilsome life (parish relief) makes him a pauper against his will...a pauper who has no reason to feel grateful for present assistance, and no motive for future exertion.<sup>21</sup>

Beginning in the 1790s but particularly after the end of the wars with France in 1815, the gentry turned increasingly to the languages of morality, politics and culture to make sense of their feelings of betrayal in a period when successive Tory governments appeared to be sacrificing the political and economic interests of agriculture to the interests of commerce and industry. As the gentry set forth their feelings of betrayal and insecurity they offered the terms of the justification of the supremacy of rural agricultural interests in a collective identity of themselves as the morally and culturally superior political class in society. This identity rested on a set of differentiations that relied on philosophical, cultural and economic differences for their meaning. It also relied for its meaning on representing the class interests of the

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in, P. Rabinow, (ed.), *The Foucault Reader. An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (St Ives, 1985), pp. 135-39.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.

<sup>21</sup> *D.C.C.*, 17 July 1826.

gentry as the classless interests of the whole of rural society. In particular the older economic objects of poor relief and the poor themselves would come to be defined and redefined by the gentry in moral and cultural terms.

One very well known construction of gentry identity, in which there was an attempt to resolve the tensions between class and culture may be found in Kenelm Digby's book *The Broad Stone of Honour*, published in 1823.<sup>22</sup> The book was dedicated to: 'the Gentlemen of England...although divided in political opinion (they) are united upon the common ground of faith, loyalty and honour'.<sup>23</sup> The Gentlemen of England included gentry and aristocratic landowners - in the political terms of the early nineteenth century - the landed interest. In associating the concept Gentlemen with what he conceived to be a trio of virtues, Digby was echoing the Christian trinity of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. He was also constituting a cultural distinction between rural and urban life. In the former, cultural life was identified as a moral outgrowth of 'religion and true philosophy' and was thus represented as a superior, natural social order. In the latter, however, culture was absent and an unnatural social order was artificially constituted by power, class, reason and money. Digby put it thus:

There are men also...who make a separation between the heart and the head, who teach us an axiom in philosophy, that self-love and self-interest are the operative principles of the soul, and who logically conclude that the chivalrous mode of existence is but the dream of an excited imagination. In

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<sup>22</sup> K.H. Digby, *The Broad Stone Of Honour* (1823). The first two editions of this work had as a subtitle, *Rules for the Gentleman of England*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.



their eyes there is nothing admirable but intellectual ability, nothing in virtue but what is derived from calculation of expediency.<sup>24</sup>

Digby, like others of his background, opposed the virtuous sentiments and feelings of the landed interest - what he termed - 'the chivalrous part of mankind' - to the city bred, calculating expediency of the middle classes - 'the savage, envious haters of all superiority'. As a guide to the conduct of the former and as a demonstration of the spiritual distance between the 'elevated sentiments' of the countryside and the materialistic expediency of the town, he reminded landowners that their acquisition of money and power must at all times be regulated by a 'general plan'. He defined this plan as a higher duty to act always in the wider interests of all the community, especially the poorer classes of society. He reminded the gentry that:

the rank which you have to support requires not so much an inheritance, or the acquisition of wealth and property, as of elevated virtue and spotless fame. The vulgar and undisciplined live by chance, and confine their deliberations to estimate the expediency of particular actions at the moment they are called upon to perform them: but you have to form in the first instance a general plan for life, to which your particular actions must be kept in subservience.<sup>25</sup>

The moral and cultural meanings that Digby attached to tradition, chivalry and mythology were constituted in opposition to an identity of materialism, expediency and rationality that was class ridden, corrupt and therefore uncultured. Digby's trinity of virtues was ordained by God so that the moral supremacy of the gentry was identified by him as an element of His Divine will. 'It is not into a strange country

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. liii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

that we conduct you', Digby wrote, 'but it is into your own, in which, perhaps, you are a stranger'.<sup>26</sup>

In his complex discourse Digby was not simply establishing the width of the cultural divide that separated the natural rulers of society - the landowners - from their upstart challengers within the urban business and industrial communities of Britain. He was also defining the Gentlemen of England by means of a series of differentiations that relied on cultural difference for their meaning. The way meaning was constructed by this discourse enables us to see how the particular category of Gentlemen developed by Digby relied on a discourse of the romantic vision of the countryside, which was itself defined in opposition to a discourse of the city as the source of dissonance in human nature and society.

The countryside, like the town, was the site of economic activity and the identity of the gentry rested also on a set of differentiations that rejected the concept of class as an organising principle. Digby recognised that the pursuit of wealth was a 'natural desire' and that financial rewards were due every bit as much to men of leisure who invested in their estates, or who lived off the interest of their investments in the funds and the money markets, as it was 'the proper compensation for labour'. In his analysis earned and unearned income are compared and defined explicitly as property and implicitly as different forms of labour. And both forms of labour led, in Digby's words, 'to the substantial and real good of this world'.<sup>27</sup> The identification of unearned income as a type of labour and labour as a source of virtue, implied both a relationship and the existence of common interests between the rural labouring rich and the rural labouring poor. These common interests could

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lv.



be completely undone, however, if, in the pursuit of wealth, expediency and self-interest (Digby's longhand for class) replaced virtue in the public and private conduct of the rich and the poor. As Digby set forth the terms of his general plan he offered also the terms of a collective identity for the Gentlemen of England. These rested on yet another set of differentiations between Gentlemen and the middle classes that relied on differences in attitude to wealth and the poor for their meaning. From his own knowledge, Digby was able to draw on many examples when defending the rights of the poor came a distant second to economic self-interest. The minutes books of the Dorset General Sessions yield many examples of what he termed 'the abridgement of the rights of the poor'. The stopping of footpaths and roads; the setting of mantraps and spring guns; the encroachment or enclosure of commons; and the imprisonment at hard labour for stick pickers and turf cutters. Digby believed absolutely that a gentleman was constituted in his own eyes and the eyes of others by his protection of the rights of the poor. Any behaviour that tended to deny the poor their proper dues was only to be expected from those men of property below the rank of a gentleman. As he put it:

the spirit of a gentleman is opposed to the narrow schemes of selfish enjoyment, to these threatening denunciations and murderous contrivances for the protection of property which are so frequently adopted by rich mechanics and persons in the middle ranks of life, who fancy themselves great men when they frown upon the poor.<sup>28</sup>

To 'frown upon the poor' by such 'narrow schemes' was practically and ethically self-defeating. Such schemes made it impossible to constitute any meaningful

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

difference between the virtues of gentry landowners and the calculating expediency of the middle classes. Unless and until such a difference could be maintained it would be impossible also for the poor to distinguish any difference between virtue and self-interest or, for that matter, to distinguish the gentry from the middle classes. According to Digby cultural distance would be maintained by cultivating the 'habit of despising the instrument in the pursuit of the end, of regarding money as the means of rewarding, encouraging, and relieving those who are the proper objects of such a disposition'.<sup>29</sup>

Digby constituted the identity of the Gentlemen of England partly in an older language of civic humanism and partly also in the newer languages of nineteenth century Romanticism and a resurgent Anglo-catholic evangelical theology. These terms are usually regarded as antithetical. Civic Humanism stressed the primacy of leisure as a medium through which virtue could be developed and articulated in the public sphere. In contrast, Romanticism and evangelical theology urged men through action to virtue and redemption. As I have already suggested, the contradictions and tensions between leisure and action as the source of virtue were resolved by Digby in a seamless association of leisure, property and labour. And because the poor and the rich shared a common identity and interest in securing the fruits of their labour, the moral supremacy of the gentry was also constituted by their mutual relationships to the poor. The constitution of property as virtue (and labour was considered to be both property and virtue) enabled the gentry to identify and represent their economic priorities as the virtuous priorities of the whole of rural society. They were able to constitute their property and economic priorities as

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.



virtuous because they identified middle class property and priorities as selfish and self-interested. Digby also defined the gentry in opposition to class which he identified as corrosive to the human spirit and destructive of culture and society. He therefore implicitly and explicitly associated the city and urban industrial forms of production with class. His positive trinity of status, providence and tradition emphasised the moral supremacy of the countryside and by association the moral supremacy of the landed interest.

From the moment discussion of the proper role of the gentry emerged as a public debate as to the 'correct' principles of political economy during the 1820s in Dorset, but particularly when the issue of the parliamentary franchise was re-opened in 1830, what exercised critics of the Dorset gentry was the adverse consequences of its self-identities for the interests of the 'people'. The ferocity of the rhetoric on both sides of the reform debate in Dorset and the physical violence that attended the elections in 1831 and 1832, were (to the gentry) unprecedented public events in their political life. Whatever their self-cultivated role as defenders of the commonweal against the encroachments of 'intellect', contemporary opponents of the Dorset gentry stripped away this public facade to project on its private face unavowed and sinister motives.

Digby's narrative identity of the Gentlemen of England was perceived in far less flattering and positive terms by opponents of the Dorset gentry who rejected entirely the gentry's self-identities as the natural governors of English society. In part this rejection, as Digby himself was well aware, reflected a cultural divide. The urban ruling class for the most part had neither attended a public school nor one of the two great universities. Their religious experience was often founded outside of orthodox

Anglicanism in the traditions and beliefs of the older respectable dissenting religions, in particular Unitarianism. In his unpublished manuscript *Moral Philosophy*, the Unitarian wool stapler and Borough magistrate William Colfox argued that:

The object of moral philosophy is to shew men their duty, and the reasons of it. It teaches what regulation of the conduct and affection, is our duty, why it is our duty, and how it is to be acquired...The foundations of the science of morality can only be laid, with success, on a judicious acquaintance with the principles of mental constitution. We must know what are the affections in which moral excellence consists, how they are to be formed and cultivated, and how opposing ones are to be repressed and exterminated.<sup>30</sup>

There is little room here for the imposition of any value system founded on faith alone, let alone the blind acceptance of values sanctioned by spurious ‘affections’, which Colfox argues are to be rejected entirely by a process of repression or extermination. From the point of view of the urban middle-classes this cultural divide also represented their very different intellectual and political traditions. Most members of the Dissenting urban ruling classes saw no contradiction between religious belief and rationality. They also rejected gentry concepts of a right to rule born of property and the leisure it supported, in favour of hard work, thrift and enterprise. The mouth-piece of urban commercial interests and Whig politics in Dorset, *The Sherborne Journal*, opined that men could reason on their own existence and that knowledge was its own morality, ‘the only deep and pure source of happiness and virtue (which) has been perpetually extending its genial influence

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<sup>30</sup> D.R.O., D43/1: Colfox Papers. Undated manuscript in the hand of William Colfox (1784-1853).



over minds hitherto left without a source of its duties and powers'.<sup>31</sup> This analysis of the positive effects of education excluded altogether the landed fraction of the ruling class as the arbiters of behaviour.

The gentry's self-identities as the natural rulers of rural society were also challenged in the columns of the *Sherborne Mercury*. During a period when the freedom of the press and of publication generally was a crucial factor in promoting political reform, John Penny, the owner and editor of the *Sherborne Mercury*, highlighted the hidden political motives of Dorset's magistrates in suppressing propaganda hostile to themselves. Copies of Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man* and *Common Sense* had been circulating intermittently in the county since at least 1792, and in 1832 both were again on sale illegally. Penny conceded that these books were classified as seditious publications and that in accordance with the strict letter of the law magistrates were entitled to seize any copies and prosecute any person selling Paine's works. But the law went no further than this and the magistrates could not seize other books or imprison their readers simply on the pretext of defending the peace and tranquillity of the county. Penny put the issue thus:

It was indeed admitted by all that a magistrate has the power of holding to bail any person selling blasphemous or seditious publications; but they must be such as the law has pronounced seditious, or blasphemous; not such as every ignorant zealot in the commission of the peace may think, or fancy to be so.<sup>32</sup>

Penny drew a distinction between the power in law of the landed ruling class as magistrates and their practical exercise of those powers which they implemented

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<sup>31</sup> *S.J.*, 4 January 1819.

<sup>32</sup> J. Penny, *Dorsetshire Emancipated from Tory Dominion* (1832), p. 7

selfishly and illegally to protect the interests of landowners. Nor was this the only arena in which the ruling class aggressively asserted an illegal discretion. In 1842 it was revealed to Parliament that for decades past the Dorset magistracy had routinely subverted the rule of law by denying a proportion of men and women accused of felonies access to trial by jury before a judge at quarter sessions.<sup>33</sup> Penny's identification of a gulf between *de jure* and *de facto* power also encapsulated other issues: the narrow issue of whether the exercise of power should be the exclusive preserve of one class, and the wider issue of how power should be regulated. Whatever the actual and informal extent of the gentry's powers of compulsion, whether their power was in fact exercised responsibly or capriciously, the bounds of their power were defined by the gentry or their agents in parliament. The gentry might protest their respect for the law and the 'people' and like Digby declare they exercised power in defence of common ideals as a sacred trust devolved on them, but they did so in vain. Men like Colfox and Penny had seen beyond and behind the terms of the gentry's sacred trust. The gentry's protestations that they governed for the 'people' were to Colfox and Penny mere propaganda designed to maintain the gentry's monopoly of economic and political power. And the gentry could be ruthless in defence of their monopoly. As we recall, it was the gentry who comprised the jury of the Special Assize in 1831 which tried the labourers who in 1830 asserted their rights as 'the people' not to starve. It was also a gentry packed grand jury that carefully selected and supervised the petty jury which sanctioned three years later the unlawful transportation of the six labourers of Tolpuddle; six men who asserted their rights as 'the people' to combine as a trade union.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Hansard*, (Third Series) vol. 61 (1842), pp. 1029-1031.

<sup>34</sup> J. Marlowe, *The Tolpuddle Martyrs* (Glasgow, 1985), pp. 81, 97.



In rejecting the role of Digby's 'Gentlemen' as the self appointed governors of Dorset, Penny introduced the element of class. He attacked the system by which inherited landed wealth monopolised political power in the county to the detriment of the real interests of the urban commercial middle class, who he argued:

Must also, I conceive, carry additional claims in a county where the middle class has greater cause of complaint than perhaps in any other in England; for I hesitate not to declare, that a spirit of monopoly has been supported for the last half century; and the interest of each town, as well as the convenience of every district has been sacrificed to this unjust and pernicious system.<sup>35</sup>

The most explicit theorising on class, however, came from the radical and republican fractions of the Dorset working classes. The young Dorset printer Richard Hassall in debating the wider issue of political economy in *The Republican* deduced the gentry's position on power and 'the people' from the principles of class conflict, human nature and private property: He argued against the gentry's monopoly of power and wealth in the following terms: 'The persons thus favoured by an unequal distribution form a separate class, having but few interests in common with the rest of the community. They possess wealth; they feel their wealth to be power; and they naturally wish to make use of it.'<sup>36</sup> But in Hassall's view, the forms of power, inheritance and accumulation practised by the Dorset gentry were neither beneficent nor those of capitalism 'because they are not applied to reproduction, but accumulated to be consumed'.<sup>37</sup> The premise of this position was the struggle

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<sup>35</sup> Penny, *Dorsetshire Emancipated*, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> *The Republican*, 1 October 1824.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

between a profit centred but parasitic rentier class, and the ‘science’ of political economy by which the industrious classes would be enabled to liberate themselves. Applied to Dorset the defining feature of the gentry was their deliberate retarding of capital formation to encourage unproductive competition and increase the profits accruing to landowners by forcing down wage levels. The effect of the gentry’s deliberate corruption of the scientific principles of political economy was to increase their consumption by impoverishing ‘the people’. Drawing a connection between wealth, power and ideology, Hassall also identified how a numerically small fraction of the gentry ruling class were able to dominate the life of the county:

It is not the number of those who support an opinion, that give it an air of authenticity; but the knowledge which the parties have of the subject on which they decide...A few have always undertaken to decide for the many; self-interest directed these few to decide after a certain manner; the many abided by it; and thus the partial opinions of a few interested individuals, have become the opinions of the multitude.<sup>38</sup>

If this was indeed a ‘general plan for life’ then it was a selfish misapplication of the power which inherited wealth and a common culture sustained. It demonstrated that the gentry landowners were the real enemies of the people, not the capitalist urban middle classes and certainly not capitalist political economy.

The explicit class context of Hassall’s propagandising on behalf of the people and political economy and Penny’s support of the economic rights of the middle class seem properly to belong to political propaganda designed to promote the cause of a radical redistribution of power in Britain. Hassall argued that agricultural

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*



production was geared to profit taking rather than capital accumulation. He presented the Dorset gentry as a homogeneous, monolithic ruling class which cynically mediated the relations of production in order to sustain an artificial order which privileged them with power and property. In so doing he emphasised the contradictions between gentry power and the social and cultural mechanisms by which it was reproduced. The gentry's exercise of their power was self-interested. They could never deliver on their promises to 'live for all the rest'. This was so because the cultural mechanisms which reproduced gentry power excluded the 'democratising' influences of the natural laws of political economy. John Penny also recognised a distinction between formal position and actual power, and like Hassall he viewed political economy as a liberating science and political monopoly as essentially corrosive of human nature and a device to sustain artificially the power of the ruling class in Dorset. Their power was sustained also because, as Penny noted, members of the ruling class had become habituated to aggressively asserting their rights to exercise discretion in all matters affecting them. This discretion was portrayed positively by Digby and almost every page of *The Broad Stone of Honour* demanded that discretion should be the cornerstone of social and economic relations. In contrast, opponents of political monopoly such as Penny and Hassall wanted natural economic laws to govern the distribution of power and the relationships between men.

Hassall's emphasis upon the social character of the ruling class, as the testimony of Penny and Digby suggests, was not the sole property of radical republicans. Hassall's analysis represented one variant which interpreted landowners as the enemies of political economy and thus of the real interests of the people. His

analysis had a long history going back as least as far as seventeenth century Diggers and Levellers and was influential with many nineteenth century reform movements such as Chartism and the Anti-Corn Law League. Another variant of Hassall's analysis linked through Digby to the Romantic Movement and emanating from within the ruling class itself has been, by virtue of its origins perhaps, more influential and tenacious in the subsequent historiography. The terms of Digby's propagandising on behalf of the 'Gentlemen of England' has been adopted subsequently within the historiography to represent the 'facts' of early nineteenth century Dorset. These 'facts' actually disguise the contradictory terms of gentry identities and misrepresent Dorset as a stable, deferential and hierarchical society, governed by a unified cultural elite.

The contradictory terms of gentry identities were in part determined by but not reducible to the sorts of structural changes outlined in chapter two. These contradictions were forced on the attention of the gentry by certain crucial events during this period. The political legacy of the French revolution, the dilution of agricultural protection, the emergence of an independent political platform amongst some tenant farmers, the removal of religious disabilities from Dissenters and Catholics, the riots of 1830-31, and the agitation to reform the parliamentary franchise imparted a crucial significance to the gentry's experiences of change during this period. The reform of the franchise shines a very bright light on the darker corners of the gentry's responses to change. In particular the contested Dorset by-election of 1831 illuminates other crucial events during this period and provides a lens to focus the anxieties and tensions within gentry identities.



The gentry who participated in the political campaigns of 1831 comprised diverse fractions split along economic, social, political and religious lines.<sup>39</sup> These different fractions often held views that seem to have had very little to do with a concern for maintaining a paternalist, hierarchical social order long held to characterise a ruling elite. Some fractions placed their faith in the regulatory power of the legal contract to manage the changes confronting them, other fractions believed as strongly that change should be managed by their personal intervention. Other gentry magistrates saw the future of rural society in terms of regulating competition between large and small producers, while still others argued for a high wage, high skill agricultural economy utilising up to date technology.<sup>40</sup> There were some who were prepared to sacrifice their self-defined discretionary rights to intervene in parish government but there was also a substantial minority of the gentry who thought they might go on in the same time honoured ways that had served their predecessors so well. The Reverend Harry Farr Yeatman, a major landowner and one of Dorset's most active magistrates, constituted these differences in governing mentality in the terms of stewardship. The gentry had a moral and public duty to engage the processes and consequences of change for the benefit of Dorset society. He put it thus:

One thing he knew, and was morally certain of, and that was that [Dorset] could no longer remain stationary in its present condition; the momentum and impulse which the increase of capital and the progress of knowledge was making, must be met by a corresponding effort on the part of the higher classes of society to employ that capital to the moral and civil improvement of the county, and to the direction of that knowledge to the attainment of

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<sup>39</sup> Chapter two.

<sup>40</sup> Chapter five.

great and useful results. If there were any that hoped the sun of civil reform and improvement would stand still above their heads, just to light them to their graves, without participating in the diffusion of this general blaze of knowledge and power and improvement...all he could say was, that he thought they would be deceived.<sup>41</sup>

Yeatman was acutely aware of the fractures and divisions within the gentry on the post war issues impacting on their management of change in the county. Successive Tory governments had promoted free trade and the interests of commerce and industry which threatened indirectly the traditional political ascendancy of agriculture. In the reform crisis of 1830-32 a Tory government would concede a measure of parliamentary reform that seemed directly to undermine that ascendancy. Yeatman's recommendation to actively engage change with its implied recognition that history was not static would be contradicted in the terms of a particular gentry identity.

In May 1831 the Dorset electorate returned two pro-reform members to Parliament. John Calcraft, a Tory who had originally opposed reform but who voted in favour of the second reading of the Reform Bill in March 1831, beat the anti-reform Tory candidate Henry Bankes into second place by 1,452 votes to 1,176. The pro-reform Whig candidate Edward Berkeley Portman topped the poll with 1,699 votes. Calcraft subsequently committed suicide on Sunday 11 September and a new election and campaign had once more to be held in Dorset. The new candidates were the Hon. William Francis Spencer Ponsonby, Whig Member of Parliament for Poole and Anthony Ashley Cooper elder son of Cropley Ashley, the Sixth Earl of

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<sup>41</sup> *D.C.C.*, 19 September 1825.



Shaftesbury. The tensions within the different terms of gentry identities are exemplified in the reform debates during this second election contest.

At the beginning of the contest appeals were made for electors to choose what was favourably described by anti-reformers (Tories) as the political traditions of Old England. These were sanctioned by God and sanctified by time and produced ‘A system under which, by God’s blessing, you have been the happiest, richest and freest nation under Heaven’.<sup>42</sup> These traditions defined Old England in the positive terms of a Christianised culture that celebrated Englishness, the Church of England and the Monarchy. Opposed to this was the legacy of the French revolution, the destroyer of tradition and the despoiler of constitutions. This represented a New England and its new institutions ‘which a French-hearted MINISTRY would cram down your throats’. The New England worshipped Irish ascendancy, atheism, republicanism and despotism.<sup>43</sup> There was also the fear of the City and its metropolitan values of endless change. One Tory election poster put the following words in the mouth of Lord Ashley; ‘Are you willing that the part of England in which you reside shall be robbed of more than 100 of its Representatives, (nine of which are from this County) and that they be transferred to the North of England and to Ireland?’<sup>44</sup> The references to the growing power of industry ‘the North of England’ and to the recent emancipation of Roman Catholics ‘to Ireland’ are clear enough. In the overheated atmosphere which prevailed in some gentry seats in Dorset during this period, the encroachments of Roman Catholicism sanctioned by Parliament seemed part of a wider conspiracy to separate Church from State and

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<sup>42</sup> D.R.O., DI/LL/33: Printed copies of printed electoral broadsheets and papers, 1806-1831; Broadsheet: *Electors of England* (Blandford, 1831).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> D.R.O., DI/LL/33: Broadsheet: *Dorset ELECTION* (Blandford, 1831).

thus precipitate the destruction of the British Constitution and the social order it reflected and defined. This overdeveloped sense of conspiracy which tainted Roman Catholics with the odours of sedition and impiety preoccupied Henry Banks during this period. Banks, the unsuccessful ultra-Tory candidate in the general election of May 1830, was one of Dorset's largest landowners and an evangelical Christian. During the debates on the abortive Roman Catholic Disability Removal Bill in 1821, he had opposed the admittance of Catholics as a threat to the Protestant Constitution and quoted the Pope saying that communion with a different church was 'like the communion between Church and Belial'.<sup>45</sup> John Calcraft denied Banks' arguments telling the House, 'that the Catholics were governed by the same passions and interests as ourselves - that they were men who possessed a great stake in the country - and that they were as sincerely attached to the Protestant part of the community to all that is most valuable in the institutions of the country'.<sup>46</sup>

The identity of the gentry landowner as a defender of the Protestant constitution was used to good effect as a stick to beat Ponsonby. He had married the Catholic Lady Barbara Ashley, heiress to the lands and fortune of Sir John Webb of Poole. This fact was sufficient to designate Ponsonby an Irishman, a Catholic and by inference a suborner of the British Protestant Constitution. In the terms of Tory rhetoric he was, 'a stranger in the land, who came from a far country, where murder and rapine walked abroad at noon-day...a Papist, a worshipper of images, the work of men's hands, and he also followed the sect of the radicals, the destroyers of real liberty'.<sup>47</sup> The Old Testament cadences and the political allusions were clear enough

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<sup>45</sup> *Hansard*, (New Series), vol. 4 (1821), p. 1285.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1449-50.

<sup>47</sup> D.R.O., Broadsheet, *Dorset ELECTION*.



to the educated gentry. So too were the veiled references to the French Revolution and Catholic Emancipation both of which were the antithesis of Englishness. ‘I spy strangers!’ was the recognised form by which a Member of parliament conveys to the Speaker the information that there is an unauthorised person in the House. ‘A stranger in the land, who came from a far country’ also brought to mind the proselyte, a convert (in its original application to Judaism). But in Ponsonby’s case it was his alleged Irishness and apostasy to the Church of Rome which made him the ‘stranger that is within thy gates’. As we will see in chapters four and five, here is a reference to belonging and place; to the longevity of the gentry by which they justified their rule of the county.<sup>48</sup>

It is almost impossible to overstate the legacy of the French Revolution and the significance of its continuing political and cultural influences in the lives of the English ruling classes and the people they ruled. The direct and oblique references to the destruction of ‘real liberty’ made during the election of 1831 had been the common currency of anti-revolutionary rhetoric for a generation. In 1821, for example, George Bankes described the revolution’s continuing influence as a ‘bankrupt firm of impudent invention’ which ‘baffled’ in its every hope and ‘belied’ by every ‘prophecy’ could nevertheless still create ‘new factions ready for credulity, new idols for folly’s worship and honourable attributes for every new disturbance of public quiet’.<sup>49</sup> The fact that Bankes made his comments more than a generation after revolutionaries had beheaded their King is evidence of the continuing political influence of the French revolution. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that Bankes’ comments were framed partly in the pessimistic political and biblical terms

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<sup>48</sup> Chapter four and Chapter five.

<sup>49</sup> *Hansard*, (New Series), vol. 4 (1821), p. 38.

of prophecy, idolatry and worship. Here is evidence which also suggests that the French Revolution had effected a decisive change to the secular and religious optimism of the English ruling classes that had been evident in the eighteenth century. Ian Bradley has described how the revolution impacted on this optimism to accelerate the encroachments of a renewed Evangelical natural theology which contributed to generating a dominant experience of:

The dread of the terrible power and presence of the God of wrath, the perpetual sense of accountability and judgement for every lapse from the highest standards of the Bible, the ever present consciousness of the fall from the precarious state of grace which could so easily occur if (mankind) failed to live worthy of his calling.<sup>50</sup>

This same dominant experience was described by the Hammonds in the terms of a terrifying legacy of ‘new magic’<sup>51</sup>, and G. Newman reminds us of the potency of its intellectual components and images:

The ideas of destruction, license, abstract political thought, atheism and impious wizened and triumphantly grimacing countenance of Voltaire, mocker of Christianity and diabolical mastermind of the Revolution, or the face of an ape, which similarly represented destruction and absolute irresponsibility. In either case a horrible grin appears to have been central to the image.<sup>52</sup>

These images, ideas, and countenances, were not those of Christian English gentlemen. As we have seen in *The Broad Stone of Honour*, and as *The Dorset*

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<sup>50</sup> I. Bradley, ‘The Politics of Godliness: Evangelicals in Parliament, 1784-1882’ (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1974), pp. 12-13.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), p. 215.

<sup>52</sup> G. Newman, ‘Anti-French Propaganda and British Liberal Nationalism in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *V.S.*, 17 (1974-5), p. 389.



*County Chronicle* repeated, English gentleman were characterised as ‘noble, venerable, just and good’.<sup>53</sup>

In the immediate post-war period, many gentry landowners in Dorset resisted the acceleration of the pace and scale of industrial production in terms which referred to their self-identities as the venerable and just guardians of rural society. Industrial manufacturing was seen by many landowners to be a temporary, ignoble and unnatural consequence of the war with revolutionary France. Tory ministers in Liverpool’s ministry characterised resistance to the consequences of industrialisation in opposite terms. What was unnatural in post 1815 Britain was the democratic ideals of the Revolution which resisted the natural effects of manufactures and industry. In the words of Lord Liverpool, ‘authority and ancient Institutions’ were not threatened by ‘the great increase of our manufacturing population’, or the dependence on ‘Foreign Demand, and the refinements in Machinery’, but by ‘the events of the French revolution’.<sup>54</sup>

Liverpool’s self-interested appeal to history were not echoed by the Tory candidate Ashley Cooper. He was convinced that it was the immediate political effects of manufactures and industry that were decidedly unnatural. ‘I foresee the destruction of equipoise’ he portentously declared in his election address of September 1831. He followed this declaration with a list of the events which would follow the destruction of equipoise. They were the:

Consequent, though mistaken, collision of interests; the Corn Laws assailed,  
and ultimately overthrown; perpetual change taking the place of stability;

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<sup>53</sup> *D.C.C.*, 6 March 1828.

<sup>54</sup> Liverpool to Grenville 14 November 1819 cited in A.J.B. Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce; The Economic Policies of the Tory Governments 1815-1830* (Oxford, 1977), p. 51.

our laws and institutions as variable as the weather; and the final settlement of one day, reversedly the final settlement of the next - in all these changes, in all these conflicts, the British farmer would be the first to suffer.<sup>55</sup>

Ashley's contrasting references to change and stability remind us of the gentry's appeals to a history disinfested of any sense of change. He, did not present the political economic categories of the Corn Laws as the contingent outcomes of perpetual change (as Yeatman had seemed to do). Instead, Ashley's election address defined 'our laws' and 'our institutions' as immanent eternal ideas. This definition denied completely Yeatman's radical notions of the 'civil sun of reform' so confidently expressed five years earlier in terms of 'momentum' and 'impulse'. In any case, the violence that accompanied the Swing Riots in Dorset during 1830 had apparently robbed Yeatman of his enthusiasm for change. It had certainly robbed him of his confidence in the gentry's ability to participate safely in what he had termed 'the diffusion of this general blaze of knowledge and power and improvement'. Indeed, by 1831 Yeatman was a decided supporter of Ashley's cautious support for moderate reform.<sup>56</sup> At the same time that Ashley referred to the fixity and unambiguity of history (*equipoise*) his discourse of proof was paradoxically expressed in the fluid and contingent terms of a 'mistaken, collision of interests'. This collision of interests, as Kenelm Digby reminds us, was between the cultured morality of the countryside and the ruthless expediency of the city. The terms of this collision were part of the discourse of the common rules of social life which identified the gentry as the natural and divinely ordained rulers of rural society. In the political terms of the anti-reform party in the by-election this identity

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1831.



was represented in opposition to the ‘rapacity of the manufacturer’ who inhabited ‘the vast cities of the north’ and who had seized the rights ‘enjoyed hitherto by land’.<sup>57</sup> The pro-reformers among the gentry neatly side-stepped this element of their self-identity to argue that the threats to stability came from ‘the lavish carelessness of (the Tories), their total disregard to the wants and wishes of the lower orders; that the landed interest has been reduced to the state of the most extreme jeopardy’.<sup>58</sup> Here is a reference to the Swing riots in Dorset and a coded reference to the identity in patriarchal oeconomy of the responsibility of the gentry to the poor. This responsibility brings us back once more to *The Broad Stone of Honour* and Digby’s clarion call to the gentry to search the terms of their identities in order to rediscover their moral authority.

The identity of the gentry as the long established defenders of even longer established traditions also came to the fore during the by-election of 1831 when contrasting appeals were made to history, tradition and hierarchy. Ashley opined that:

A House of Commons reformed on the model of the Bill must speedily succeed in destroying entirely the peace and happiness of the community, by annihilating the nicely-adjusted balance of the Constitution, conflicting with, and soon destroying the House of Lords, and then making an attack even upon the hereditary monarchy. Evils like these are before us, and they cannot be contemplated without dreading the destruction of the social happiness of every class in the empire.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> D.R.O., DI/LL/33: Printed election paper, (August, 1831).

<sup>58</sup> D.C.C., 29 September 1831.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

Here we have the gentry landowner as defender of hierarchy and tradition, and thus social happiness and equipoise. The gentleman whose disinterested rule of rural society is conducted on behalf of the interests of every class of 'the people'. But Ashley's admixture of the terms of class and community is not noticed by the most recent historian of the 1831 Dorset parliamentary elections.<sup>60</sup> Richard Morris is unable adequately to explain to himself or his readers what he terms 'the nagging fact' of voter allegiances during the election campaign. He concedes that the issues of Reform were probably important but concludes that 'since Ashley won the by-election by a mere 36 votes, his own attributes and his opponent's deficiencies (sic) were very probably the clinching factor in the Tory victory'.<sup>61</sup> Morris ultimately reduces the complexities of the reform debate to a contest between the personalities of the men who stood as candidates. He presents the terms of Ashley's arguments as outrageous 'scaremongering', exemplifying this characterisation with Ashley's declaration that 'Those franchises, and privileges and charters, which have existed for more than six hundred years are to be overthrown and destroyed by a measure conceived in three short months'.<sup>62</sup> The gentry had historically claimed to represent the interests of the people of England'. But the 'people' had seen their political power usurped by an unrepresentative aristocracy concerned only to elevate their narrow interests. On the other side of the political divide in 1831 the Whig David Parry Okeden opposed Ashley's fears with an argument that claimed the aristocracy's usurpation of the rights of the people was the real revolution in English political life. And the measure of reform before parliament and the voters in Dorset 'will put a stop to this really revolutionary measure which has been going on so

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<sup>60</sup> R. Morris, 'The Dorset by-election of 1831', *PDNHAS.*, 109 (1987), pp. 5-16.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.



long'.<sup>63</sup> Where Morris sees scaremongering I read the tensions between Ashley's coherent and legitimate concerns with the hierarchy and welfare of society and the necessity of his securing votes from a spectrum of voters. Particularly that section of the enfranchised urban middle class hostile to the political monopoly of landowners in Dorset but who were nonetheless increasingly appealed to by Whigs and Tories in the terms of a myth of the English people.<sup>64</sup> The gentry's consciousness of a middle class was not necessarily the consciousness of class but a recognition of the numbers of middle class voters in urban Dorset. According to John Cannon, some 22 per cent of voters in Dorset in 1831 were urban voters but *The Dorset Poll Book* of 1831 suggests that as many as 33 per cent of voters in Dorset may have been urban.<sup>65</sup> The deployment by the Dorset gentry of notions of class became the means by which they sought to develop a sense of common interests with urban voters in Dorset. The identity of the people and the gentry patriarch was turned back upon Ashley in a precis of the history of parliamentary reform in England. Okeden, in an implied reference to Wilkes and Wyvill, pointed out that there had been standing committees in favour of parliamentary reform since 1780, and in an admixture of hierarchy and class he claimed that a middle class had been 'produced and brought into existence, between the higher and lower orders, who are entitled to rights which they are determined to maintain'.<sup>66</sup>

The alleged rights of this middle class were directly opposed in many instances to the interests of the gentry. Ashley was certainly concerned that an increase in

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> P. Joyce, 'A People and a Class', in P. Joyce (ed.), *Class* (Oxford, 1995), p. 165.

<sup>65</sup> J. Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform, 1640-1832* (1972), p. 279; D.R.O., D399/8/1, *Dorset Poll Book* 1831.

<sup>66</sup> *D.C.C.*, 29 September 1831.

middle class voters would inevitably result in the 'Corn Laws assailed'. And he resisted reform of the franchise because it seemed to him to entail deleterious consequences to the rental incomes of the gentry. These alleged middle class rights also directly contradicted some of the fundamental elements of the gentry's self-identities. The gentry's ideas of a natural world, together with their emphasis on Biblical patriarchy and its discourses of cultural and moral superiority, identified the gentry as the sole natural rulers of rural society. These ideas, and the identities they dealt in, were threatened by a reform of the franchise because it seemed to signal the growing political ascendancy of commerce and trade. Indeed, the gentry's carefully constructed self-identities were also being effectively denied by successive Tory ministries. These ministries took on the policy prescriptions of the classical economists. As Hilton has put it, Tory governments 'broke with physiocracy, autarchy and agricultural expansion'.<sup>67</sup>

Challenges to gentry authority also came from a fraction of their tenant farmers. These challenges may be seen in the so-called Webb-Hall agitation of the eighteen twenties when some farmers, with enough economic power and self-confidence to adopt an independent political platform, attempted to dictate terms to their landlords on the issues of rents and leases.<sup>68</sup> The Webb-Hall political platform did not survive the eighteen-twenties but the issues of rents and leases remained a potent source of conflict between farmers and their landlords. These conflicts were a continuing challenge and denial of the authority of the Dorset gentry. Two examples will illustrate this. The reverend Edward Bradford owned an estate in Corscombe which

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted in M. Berg, *The machinery question and the making of political economy 1815-1848*, (Cambridge, 1982), p. 39.

<sup>68</sup> T.L. Crosby, *English Farmers and the Politics of Protection 1815-52* (Sussex, 1977), pp. 1-4, 13-15, 17-18, 27-28.



by 1827 had come to be burdened with what he euphemistically termed rent arrears but which were more properly rent refusals by some of his tenants seeking to enforce rent reductions and abatements.<sup>69</sup> Bradford sought the advice of his solicitor William Ffooks on the best way to force payment from those of his tenants who were in most serious arrears with their rents. Ffooks advised Bradford to submit to his tenants, at least in the short term, pointing to the difficulties of securing new tenants at that time.<sup>70</sup> Bradford reluctantly concurred with Ffook's advice and was immediately subjected to further hard bargaining by his tenants. In particular one Samuel Lewis continued to withhold his rent in order to secure Bradford's approval to have seventy six pounds of rent arrears written off; the remaining one hundred pounds to be paid in annual instalments of twenty five pounds. Lewis was in a strong bargaining position. He knew that Bradford would face real difficulties in securing another tenant for his farm; and he also knew that Bradford could not afford to lose the rental income while the farm lay unoccupied. An exasperated and exhausted Bradford was finally forced to agree terms and wrote to Ffooks to inform him of the new arrangement: 'I have proposed instalments from knowing the obstinacy of (Lewis) who would ruin himself rather than be driven.'<sup>71</sup>

The confrontational politics that marked some gentry tenant relations in this period enabled other tenants to secure advantageous rents and leases by exploiting the insecurities of estate stewards and bailiffs. The reverend Thomas Dade (an active magistrate) was steward of Bincombe Manor and responsible for the management of the Caius College estate in south Dorset. In 1829 the lease of the 458 acre

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<sup>69</sup> D.R.O., D/FFO/12/142: Ffooks and Darlington, Clients' Letters, 1821-1834. Letter, Bradford to Ffooks, 27 May 1827.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* Letter, Ffooks to Bradford, 1 June 1827.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* Letter, Bradford to Ffooks, 8 June 1827.



Bincombe farm fell vacant and Dade granted an annual lease to Richard Warne at £450 per annum. Warne insisted that the first eighteen months should be rent free, and in return he guaranteed to get the farm into a four course shift within three years. In return for his guarantee Warne also asked and received one hundred pounds from the collegiate body and the grant of a years remission of tithes from Dade himself.<sup>72</sup> For the next five years, however, Warne resisted the performance of the terms of his lease by the simple expedient of never signing it. Neither did he pay rent or tithes during this period.<sup>73</sup> He drove a wedge between Dade and the College by deluging the Collegiate authority with endless complaints about Dade's stewardship of their property and suggestions to improve the future prospects of the estate. In this way he was able to isolate Dade from the college authorities and skilfully exploit Dade's fears for the college's property during the Swing riots of 1830-31 and again during the later reform crisis of 1831-32.<sup>74</sup> The unfortunate Thomas Dade suffered a complete breakdown. 'You have no idea how completely my comforts are destroyed,' he confided to William Ffooks in September 1834, 'I am so very easily excited, that I feel it best, for my comforts, to give up Bincombe.'<sup>75</sup> Dade quit the estate in 1834 for health reasons and retired to Brighton. Richard Warne held out for a further eight years and was not finally evicted from his tenancy until 1842.<sup>76</sup>

These are extreme incidents but they are symbolic. For all its collective economic strength and considerable political power, the Dorset gentry were shot through with individual anxieties. Contemporaries like David Parry Okeden and twentieth-

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<sup>72</sup> D.R.O., D/FFO/13/7: Ffooks and Darlington, Clients' Letters, 1827-78. Letter, Dade to Ffooks, 3 March 1829.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 April 1834.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 September 1831.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, (n.d.) September 1834.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, Ffooks to Caius College, 23 March 1842.



century historians such as Barbara Kerr ascribed the ‘helplessness’ and fatalism of agricultural labourers partly to their sense of powerlessness before the inexorable power of the natural world.<sup>77</sup> What has not been noted, however, is the similar sense of powerlessness that was on occasions experienced by landowners. In part their anxieties reflected the nature of farming where scarcities followed gluts and booms preceded slumps irrespective of the efforts and intentions of farmers and landlords alike. John Calcraft, who owned a large estate in south-east Dorset, concluded a parliamentary speech on the import of foreign corn saying ‘(I had) hoped that corn would be cheaper; and if there were plentiful crops that would of necessity be the case; but it would be vain to look to any other cause than the bounty of Providence for producing that effect’.<sup>78</sup> And in a state of spiritual and political hopelessness apparently brought on by his vacillation on the issue of parliamentary reform, Calcraft (like Castlereagh before him) killed himself by cutting his throat.<sup>79</sup>

The accelerating processes of change during this period were constructed by the gentry in the terms of a moral crisis. Their sense of recurring moral crisis disinfested patriarchy of its vocabularies of rights determined and allocated by an individual’s fortuitous relationship to the head of the family. As a result the gentry recast the contingent relationships of the family as a relationship of humankind to their environment and ultimately to God. This new relationship was determined by moral necessity and not by rights. The tensions between these discourses would finally fracture the ideas of patriarchal society. As a consequence the gentry were, in

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<sup>77</sup> *P.P.*, Report From His Majesty’s Commissioners for inquiring into the administration and practical operation of the poor laws (1834, XXVII-XXXVIII), [Hereafter called the *P.L.R.*], Third Report of D.O.P. Okeden, Appendix A (1834, XXXVIII), [Hereafter called *Third Report*] p. 312, B. Kerr, *Bound to the Soil: A Social History of Dorset* (1968), p. 99.

<sup>78</sup> *Hansard*, (New Series) vol. 14 (1826), p. 1213.

<sup>79</sup> *D.C.C.*, 15 September 1831; and see also, *Journal of Mary Frampton*, (ed.) H.G. Mundy (1885), [f.n.], (15), p. 66.

a very real sense, uncertain of their collective identity. They would be compelled to recreate a coherent identity of themselves in order to confront the moral crisis which they had defined. This process of re-creation and redefinition was constituted within and by the languages of political economy, providential theology and that part of the ideas of patriarchal society which justified politically their natural right to rule, a multiplex discourse I have termed *the common rules of social life*.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Gentry Identities and Ideas of Dorset*

This chapter will explore the process by which the gentry and others constructed an idea of Dorset as both a unitary political-geographical unit and as the location of an original unity rooted in traditional values and virtues. The invention of Dorset as a traditional society of belonging was carried out in opposition to the newer metropolitan values emerging from the social, economic and political changes experienced by much of the rest of the population of early nineteenth century England. The terms of this idea of Dorset were constructed in tandem with the gentry's own identities as the natural cultured rulers of rural society and contained similar contradictions and tensions. I am here using the phrase 'idea of Dorset' in a neo-Platonic sense familiar to the classically educated gentry: the idea of Dorset as an eternally existing ideal archetype of which such categories as the gentry and the poor were derived as imperfect copies to be improved.

Traditional historiographical practice has most often unconsciously chosen the narrative which leads to the status quo of its own day. This narrative describes a transition from a traditional to a 'modern' society. It therefore concentrates on a process of accretion of 'modern' political, cultural and economic elements which gradually void and replace their 'traditional' counterparts. These accretions include the triumph of capitalism, the adoption of modern farming techniques, a belief in rational contractual relations, the adoption of modern techniques of welfare, and the

growth of political and social stability.<sup>1</sup> This is a powerful narrative tradition which has predictable results. It perpetuates the gentry's construction of identities as the facts of history. Historians of Dorset society therefore also assume as fact the gentry's propaganda that they governed rural society by reference to a shared immanent identity of the county. In contrast, the following discussion will explore how gentry ideas of Dorset were discursively constructed and changed through time. The outcome of these narrative processes would be the idea of Dorset as a fully formed organic inheritance with intense local and social attachments governed by the ineluctable laws of a providential political economy. This identity and its emphasis on ethical testing to promote individual morality and responsibility gradually voided an older identity of Dorset as a federation of patriarchal households.

The most significant exemplar of the narrative construction of an idea of Dorset may be found in the reverend John Hutchins' *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, begun in the early 1760s and first published in 1774.<sup>2</sup> The *History* purports to describe but actually constructs a genealogy of the gentry and a taxonomy of Dorset which draws its readers into a sense of time, place and belonging through language rich in classical, geological and geographical references. The *History* was sponsored by the aristocratic and gentry landowners Henry, Lord Digby; Earl Ilchester; Joseph, Lord Milton; George Pitt; Humphrey Sturt and James Frampton. Hutchins was also scrupulous in consulting with every member of the

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the origins of a 'Whig' idea of history see, M.G.H. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain. Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 140-145.

<sup>2</sup> J. Hutchins, *The History of the Antiquities of Dorset* (Blandford, 1874).



gentry who appeared in its pages.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, then, it may be considered as a collaborative project between the author and his objects of study.

The opening chapters of the *History* follow the conventions established almost two centuries earlier by William Camden in his *Brittania* published in successive editions after 1586.<sup>4</sup> The history of Dorset is described in terms of its antiquities, original inhabitants, subsequent colonisers and the evolution of its geographical boundaries from the disappearance of the Roman legions in the early fifth century to the arrival of the Norman conquerors in 1066. Where Camden identified Roman culture and conquest as the most important unifying and civilising culture in Britain, Hutchins followed the patriarchal model of history in Thomas Fuller's *The Worthies of England*. This model celebrated the unifying and civilising culture of the gentry and compared England to a house and 'the several shires may properly be resembled to the rooms thereof'.<sup>5</sup> It was Fuller's intention 'to describe the furniture of these rooms; such eminent commodities which every country doth produce, with the persons of quality bred therein, and some observables coincident with the same subject'.<sup>6</sup> The object of Fuller's *Worthies* was, 'to present examples to the living, having here precedents of all sorts and sizes; of men famous for valour, wealth, wisdom, learning, religion and bounty to the public'.<sup>7</sup>

Part of Fuller's objective in writing his history was to capture for posterity the 'precedents of all sorts and sizes' of his worthies. Hutchins was also interested in posterity and worked diligently to reveal and preserve the lines of descent of Dorset

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. vi. The first edition of the *History* was dedicated to 'the rest of the Nobility and Gentlemen of this County, and other Encouragers of it'.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of these conventions see, J. Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste. The Politics of Architecture and Design in Britain 1550-1960* (1995), pp. 159-62.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in, Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste*, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> J. Freeman, (ed.), Thomas Fuller, *The Worthies of England* (1952), pp. 1-2.

families. What Hutchins termed the evidence of ‘the names and alliances of our ancestors’ was to be preserved to guide the conduct of future generations. The *History* would reveal how the Dorset of 1774 had arrived at its then present condition. He wrote:

There is some satisfaction in a gentleman knowing the particular history of his own family, and being able to point out through what hands his several lands and tenements have passed, and whether they were acquired by purchase, grant, or inheritance; and if to this be added a desire of transmitting to posterity the memory of what is universally now known, the modern part of this History will in great measure answer this end; which may be considered as a monument of the present times, and a faithful relator to succeeding generations of the present state of the county of Dorset.<sup>8</sup>

In other terms, part of Hutchins’ purpose was to restore history and thus antiquity to Dorset and restore Dorset and its gentry to history. For Hutchins, identity was defined not only by inheritance but created also by the evolution of law, religion, manners, architecture and the liberal arts. He was, to be sure, far more concerned with history as genealogy but the *History* also implicitly addressed the questions of origins and nature of the changing ideas of Dorset.

The *History* is in fact a series of narrative histories of the evolution of each parish in Dorset set within a very broad overview of the county. These narratives are ordered by the same taxonomy. Beginning with the Domesday survey, Hutchins traced the origins and changes to the estates of the major families in each parish. He recorded their pedigrees and their houses, the descent of church patronage in their

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<sup>8</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, p. ix.



line, their charitable benefactions, their respective roles in the political and economic history of the county and their contributions to the arts. This is a narrative of the oeconomy of Dorset; what Hutchins termed ‘A proper regard...to the sentiments and opinions of others who have gone before us’.<sup>9</sup> It identified, proved and justified the present organisation and condition of the county by reference to the historical antecedents of its parish households. One can read in Hutchins’ appeals to history and tradition an echo of the later Burkean metaphor of the English political system which, ‘at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression’.<sup>10</sup>

The *History* is also a taxonomy premised and ordered by a view of a static metaphor of equilibrium. It directed each reader’s attention to the prior functioning, the subsequent periods of breakdown, and the renewed states of functioning that each parish underwent through time. It described to its readers the impact on parish structures and institutions of events such as the collapse of the civil authority of Rome and the subsequent Saxon colonisation. It also referred to the Norman Conquest and the upheavals of the Civil War, interregnum and restoration.<sup>11</sup> The *History* also directed each reader’s attention to the condition of unchangeable constancy inscribed within the identity of Dorset. This was the gentry and their intense local and social attachments formed in the past.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1987 edn), p. 120.

<sup>11</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, pp. v, viii, xiv, xvi, xvii-xx.

Hutchins erected on the origins of Dorset a narrative of the evolution of its social, religious and political forms and institutions which celebrated their antiquity. He described his method in choosing his materials thus:

Much care was to be taken in the choice of them, that on the one hand no thing worthy to be preserved might be omitted, and, on the other, that nothing too minute and trifling might be inserted. This last error seemed the most pardonable; for what some might think superfluous, might appear to others worthy of attention; and, upon the whole, if in searching into such a heap of ruins, some dust be collected with the gold, like rust adhering to coins, though it adds nothing to their intrinsic value, yet it is in itself proof of their antiquity.<sup>12</sup>

The *History*, then, described a past Golden Age of kindly and paternalistic country gentlemen contrasted with oblique references to a more hard-hearted and dissolute present. Felicity Heal reminds us to treat the idea of a golden age with scepticism but nevertheless these conventional descriptions had a rhetorical and homiletic purpose. They were idealised and moralised to create an idea of place to bind ‘the gentry to their own countryside’ and to set the ideals and standards for succeeding generations.<sup>13</sup>

Hutchins’ idea of Dorset (and the idea of his gentry sponsors and collaborators) was principally constituted in a biblical taxonomy. This taxonomy constructed an identity of Dorset partly as an ancient landscape composed of such elements as a geology, soils, a climate, and flora and fauna. In part also as a site of ‘pleasure and profit’ located in time and space. This taxonomy was organised by the Biblical

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>13</sup> F. Heal, ‘The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England, *P&P.*, 102, (1984), p. 82.



narrative of the creation ordered by notions of a subsequent covenant with humanity. In this narrative the material elements of creation and the peoples charged with their stewardship were formed by the hands of God. They were later inundated by a subsequent flood to re-emerge purified at some time in a distant past. This biblical taxonomy constituted a narrative of the proof of the antiquity of Dorset, a narrative which was formative in the social and political taxonomy of the county. Dorset was God's country, well provided with soils and water and distinguished by a proverbial character as 'the garden of England'. The blessings that God and his nature had bestowed upon the county meant that it was 'well watered, and adapted in a high degree for both profit and pleasure'.<sup>14</sup> Through the ages, different colonising peoples had been attracted to settle in Dorset by its pleasantness and fertility. The physical remnants of their presence were recorded in loving detail in the *History*<sup>15</sup> and the agricultural commentator William Stevenson also noted that the county had been:

Particularly distinguished by the Romans and the West Saxons; the former had in this county many more stations, and summer camps, than in most other parts of England; and the Saxon Monarchs evinced their partiality and regard for it, by the numbers of palaces they had in it, the stately Minsters which they built, and the directions generally expressed by them on their death beds, or in their wills, that they should be interned in those monuments of their piety.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> W. Stevenson, *General View of the Agricultural Survey of the County of Dorset; with Observations of the Means of its Improvement* (1815), p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, pp. iv, v, xii-xii.

<sup>16</sup> Stevenson, *General View*, p. 30.

We have here a taxonomy of antiquity, connection and continuity; the implicit idea of Dorset as the location of freedoms derived from Roman and Saxon laws and King Alfred. This idea of Dorset justified and sanctified possession by antiquity and usage.

The idea of Dorset as the site of the working out of historically inspired traditions of liberty corresponded to the terms of the self-identities of the gentry who were the exemplars of these liberties. Thus the gentry were placed at the centre of Dorset history. This is also a discourse of the gentry's stewardship of liberty as the wise governors of their families and estates for the common welfare of all. It renders intelligible Hutchins' taxonomy and idea of Dorset in terms of the role of the household and inherited traditions of his gentry sponsors who were responsible for governing Dorset and creating the moral and monetary wealth of the county.

The narrative identity of Dorset as a model of the patriarchal household also defined the relationships between the gentry and the rest of rural society in terms of the enforcement of familial responsibility of the rich for the maintenance of the poor. This type of governmental narrative, as I have shown elsewhere, has an oeconomic, or householding rather than economic conception of the art of government.<sup>17</sup> This form of government has for its central concern the formation of the population as an object of knowledge, as a means of evaluating the merits of various policies. It informs them of the constituent parts of the memory of what is universally now known and about their own habits and customs and those of the people they governed. It does this so that they and their successors might continue to secure the subsistence of all the inhabitants of Dorset. It is possible to argue that

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<sup>17</sup> Chapter three.



the object of Hutchins' *History* in the terms of contemporary political inquiry was thus to constitute an identity of Dorset to assist the Gentry and their successors, in the art of government. When Hutchins wrote of the established laws of oeconomy of Dorset, he was not referring to the activities of a functioning economy whose purposes county government must serve, but to the particular means which, taking into account the circumstances of the county, were established for providing the wants of its inhabitants.

At the same time that Hutchins was constituting his taxonomy of equilibrium and continuity, he was also signalling the idea of Dorset as the location of dynamic and undesirable changes. As he noted in the *History*:

This county presents some of the strongest instances of the ruinous consequences of the monopoly of farms; a single person residing at a distance sometimes occupies nearly a whole parish, and the descendants of the former yeomanry, who have occupied little farms, and brought up families with some degree of comfort and credit, have now dwindled into day labourers; and, as having nothing at stake, are little concerned or interested in the welfare of the community.<sup>18</sup>

In the terms of the organisation of agriculture, the reason for this changing pattern of land-ownership was 'improving farming'. Its consequences for the subsistence of the poor may be seen in the Reverend Harry Place's comments about Marnhull where:

The young men emigrate to London, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chichester, Bath, Bristol, etc., because they cannot get comfortable, or indeed, any

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<sup>18</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 4, p. 39.

habitations at home. So many young men have emigrated of late years that we find a great scarcity of labourers as husbandmen, few being left for agricultural purposes but infirm old men and boys, a manifest injury to the parishes and the country.<sup>19</sup>

Place's concerns were for improving agriculture although he shared Hutchins' concerns for some of its 'ruinous consequences'. As he made clear in further observations on emigration, the injury to parishes was not simply a brake to improving agriculture but an injury to the morals of the poor. To work under impersonal contractual relations in towns and cities and to earn a rate of wages larger than the needs of subsistence, decayed the morals of the poor.<sup>20</sup> Implicit in this observation was a causal link between the consumption of the poor and immorality once the need for the necessities of life had been satisfied. Moreover, when the poor earned more than their bare subsistence their productivity also declined which threatened the very roots of society.

Notwithstanding these references to the dynamic dissolving power of improving agriculture, the *History* gave shape and coherence to an idea of Dorset as the location of certain immanent values and traditions. These were the traditions of tranquillity, stability, peace, prosperity and the values of liberty which needed only the wise governance of the gentry to flourish. In so doing, Hutchins refused to face the degree of discontinuity revealed by his own research. He found refuge in the mythic idea of the gentry's unchanging and constant presence in the governance of Dorset in order to construct a history of immanent continuities. These continuities

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



would oppose, modify or deny an emerging character of the county as a site of dynamic changes.

Other parts of the *History* demonstrate that these dynamic changes were part of a terrain in which the Anglican church and its religious sentiments were being challenged by the gradual encroachments of dissenting theologies and the growth of urban populations.<sup>21</sup> As these challenges and changes suggest, there was a paradox at the heart of the *History*. It acknowledged that Dorset was the product of certain historical forces and subjected to change through time but it also insisted that the county was an island of rural calm and charm. The resolution of this paradox was the self-identities of the gentry who stood outside of and above political and commercial changes. Their pedigrees revealed they were for so long a part of the world they could conceive of themselves as the one constant in a changing world, the bedrock of Dorset society.<sup>22</sup> The memorials of their ancestors, so lovingly recorded in the *History*, revealed a fidelity to the patriarchal and cultural values of landed wealth and a loyalty to the Protestant constitution. Two examples among hundreds exemplify these values. The memorial to Edward Butt lists the typical domestic pieties and charitable values of the gentry:

Oh! in his mild, his ever gentle heart,  
Each soft affection dwelt, devoid of art!  
His was the tender wish, the pitying sigh,  
Domestic love, and feeling charity;  
Still fond to give, still ready to bestow,

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, *Ibid.*, vol. 1, (The history of Poole), pp. 60-61; (The history of Wareham), p. 99; (The history of East Lulworth), pp. 385-91; vol. 2, (The history of Melcombe Regis), pp. 459-61.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. xcvi-xcix; index of 256 pedigrees and associated memorials.

He felt a pang at sight of human woe.

The poor, the hungry, eat his daily bread,

They eat, and bless'd the pious hand that fed.<sup>23</sup>

The six bells which were hung in Stalbridge church from the sixteenth century were inscribed with a variety of homiletics. The fifth bell, inscribed after the French had executed their King in 1793, was a rebuke to English Jacobins, an affirmation of loyalty to the British Crown, and a plea to preserve the economic fortunes of Stalbridge:

God save the King and prosper the town,

To keep the Democrates down,

To effect it ye Britons be firm in the cause.

In supporting our King, Constitution and Laws.<sup>24</sup>

The plea to preserve the economic fortunes of Stalbridge reminds us that the identity of Dorset as a series of patriarchal households was also amenable to being reconstituted as a taxonomy of commercial resources in the terms of the profits and losses of its commercial bounty. This reconstituted identity would provide a much more dynamic idea of Dorset and can be clearly seen in William Stevenson's *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Dorset*, published in 1813. He opened his survey by locating Dorset in present space rather than historic time in the following terms:

Dorsetshire is a maritime county, lying in the south of England, between 50° 30', and 51° 6' north latitude, and 10° 58' and 30° 18' west longitude. It is irregular in its forms on all sides, its long northern side having a great

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 220; memorial to Edward Butt, M. A., died 12 January 1781.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 678.



angular projection in the middle, and its sea-coast running out into points and headlands. Across the centre of it, from north to south, it measures about 36 miles, and from east to west above fifty miles....[It] is bounded on the north by Wiltshire and Somersetshire, on the west by Devonshire, on the east by Hampshire, and on the south by the British Channel.<sup>25</sup>

What Stevenson termed his ‘statistical performances’ of Dorset constituted an identity of the county in the terms of its economic organisation as the location of scientific improving farming. The taxonomy of his *General View*, was broadly similar to that in the *History* but was directed to very different ends. The condition of unchangeable constancy inscribed within Stevenson’s identity of Dorset was the natural freedoms of the market. A market place in which any man possessed of energy and foresight might reap proportionate financial rewards.<sup>26</sup> This dynamic identity of Dorset was opposed to the unchanging constancy of the gentry’s intense local and social attachments inscribed within their identity of Dorset as a stable and hierarchical society. Stevenson’s ‘statistical performances’ opened up the exciting but unstable vista of Dorset as a place of risk and reward.

Stevenson celebrated the stability of the social and cultural norms of a Dorset society comprised of independent petty producers and at the same time argued for the economic and intellectual satisfactions of large scale, competitive farming.<sup>27</sup> The former had the benefits of sustaining a stable, hierarchical society, the latter offered opportunities for economic and personal improvement. Notwithstanding Stevenson’s evident excitement for the prospects of risk and reward, there was a

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<sup>25</sup> Stevenson, *General View*, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 104, 117, 121-134.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

fracture in his inscription of the natural freedoms of the market in his identity of Dorset. This fractured identity encapsulated the tensions between an idea of the county as a place organised for profit and the idea of Dorset as a stable, harmonious and deferential society. For gentry landowners the rewards of improving farming were clear enough but the associated political risks to them created great concern over the future of rural society. As we have already seen, the terms of political economy which underpinned scientific, improving farming were part of a discourse by which a commercial and industrial ‘middle class’ justified their encroachments into the political life of the country.<sup>28</sup> If these political threats to Dorset society and agriculture could be summed up in a single word it was City. And as Raymond Williams has demonstrated it was most often the language of the ‘city and the plough’ which encompassed the self-identities of the rural ruling classes. In describing the historical opposition of city to countryside he wrote:

People have often said the “city” when they mean capitalism or bureaucracy or centralised power, while the “country”...has at times meant everything from independence to deprivation. For at times these express, not only in disguise and displacement but in effective mediation or in offered and sometimes effective transcendence, human interests and purposes for which there is no other immediately available vocabulary. It is not only an absence or distance of more specific terms and concepts; it is that in country and city, physically present and substantial, the experience finds material which gives body to the thought.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Chapter three.

<sup>29</sup> R. Williams, *The Country and the City* (1973), p. 291.



Put in other terms part of ‘the material which gives body to the thought’ was the dilution or rejection of the idea of a protected trade in corn. The Corn Laws were the barrier to the overweening political ambitions of the commercial and industrial middle classes.<sup>30</sup> The Dorset gentry’s concern over the prospects of agriculture and the future of rural society was inseparable from their concern over the political encroachments of the city. The intermixing of these political and economic concerns were also influential in assisting the gentry to construct an idea of Dorset. Debating a proposal in parliament to reform the Corn Laws in 1815 Henry Banks put it thus:

It might appear very philosophical to recommend the freedom of trade in all circumstances; but this perfect freedom of trade could never be extended upon such a subject, to a country that was so much an artificial country as this was, and when this unlimited freedom of unrestricted trade could not exist with respect to other things. If the people now employed in agriculture could be withdrawn from the country, and cooped up in towns, to follow manufactures, he believed that the change would be by no means desirable. We should have no longer that brave and hardy peasantry which was the boast of the country...Instead of having a peaceable, easy governed society, they would place the population of the country in a state that the peace of the community would depend upon their being constantly kept in employment. How seldom was any combination or ferment heard of in this country from the stoppage of agricultural labour? but how frequently and

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<sup>30</sup> M. Berg, *The machinery question and the making of political economy 1815-1848* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 87.

how recently had the peace of the country been disturbed from manufacturers being out of employment.<sup>31</sup>

Notwithstanding the gentry's defence of the rural in opposition to free trade and the city, they were increasingly forced to accept that the importance of manufacturing was on a par with that of agriculture. As Henry Bankes put it: 'The interests of commerce and manufactures were so closely connected with those of agriculture, that the one could not be depressed without injuring the other, and that the enemies of either were substantially the enemies of both.'<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, Bankes identified the city with disorder and the corruption of people. In contrast he presented the countryside as the source of peace and harmony, the location of 'brave and hardy' people. But he is also saying something more than this. The older patriarchal narrative of the burden of the poor told the story of wealth creation and stability in terms of a constantly maintained or employed population. Maintaining the subsistence of the poor in the present was conducive to a monetary and moral return in the future.<sup>33</sup> Bankes has modified this narrative to suggest that morality is the natural consequence of living in the countryside, not the result of maintaining the subsistence of the poor. As he put it, 'How seldom was any combination or ferment heard of in this country from the stoppage of agricultural labour? In contrast, the city was the breeding ground of conflict: 'how frequently and how recently had the peace of the country been disturbed from manufacturers being out of employment'. Thus the inconstant employment of the rural poor did not lead to the sorts of breakdown in government and order that followed unemployment in the town. This

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<sup>31</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 29 (1815), pp. 1069-70.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1068-69.

<sup>33</sup> Chapter six.



was so because, as Hutchins' *History* demonstrated to the gentry, the countryside and the gentry were ordained by God.

At the local level, Bankes' idea of Dorset necessarily painted social relations in the county as conforming to a state of organic perfection to which the immorality and incivility of manufacturing towns was unfavourably compared. As Skrine wrote, 'The vicinage of [the Stour] in particular, and indeed Dorsetshire in general, are noted for a profusion of fine seats, and a race of noblemen and country gentlemen, who exercise the splendid and captivating hospitality of past ages, yet uncontaminated by the enticement of manufactures.'<sup>34</sup> On a national political level, as Bankes' comments suggest, the process of constructing an identity of Dorset in opposition to the city and machinery actually required the implicit and explicit recognition of the importance of the city and manufacturing. Recognition of the importance of the city forced the gentry, wittingly and unwittingly, to intermix the natural and cultural terms of patriarchal oeconomy with the rational terms of the discourses of 'scientific' political economy. The intermixing of these terms at the local level can be seen in the plans which were mooted during 1825 to construct a railway to bring coal from the mines in the Mendips into Northern and North-western Dorset. This debate encompassed the issues of productivity, competitiveness and machinery. As Harry Farr Yeatman put it:

Now labour to be productive, must also be skilful and it could not be skilful without the aid and use of machinery; which again could not be worked to any advantage without the aid and use of fuel - hence it was that the manufactures of (Dorset) has disappeared by degrees, as competition with

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Stevenson, *General View*, pp. 70-71.

improved systems became impossible and difficult, and were carried out in the North, where fuel was in abundance on the spot.<sup>35</sup>

The gentry might sanction the use of machinery for agriculture but the idea of machinery for factory production could not be easily accommodated within an identity of Dorset that had been constituted in opposition to the city and manufacturing. Yeatman secured support for the railway project from another magistrate Charles Bowles but the project was roundly rejected by the majority of magistrates in the terms of the identity of Dorset as an original, organic unity; a peaceful, quiet, agricultural county. James Frampton spoke for the majority of the opposition. He said:

It was the peculiar blessing of this quiet, happy county, not to be a manufacturing county: It was one of its great advantages to have no riots, no disturbances, no soldiers called in to quell tumults. It was a peaceful, quiet, agricultural county, the manners of the peasantry were submissive and orderly, and he should conceive it one of the greatest curses that could happen to the county to have manufactures established in it. If such were the intended change, the habits of the villagers would be immediately demoralized, and drunkenness and immorality reign everywhere. He was not singular in his objections on this head; many other gentlemen of the county were on the same side of the question, and utterly hostile to manufacturing improvement and innovations.<sup>36</sup>

The contradictions and tensions between Frampton's identity of Dorset and Yeatman's support for machinery (and by implication disorder) are nicely illustrated

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<sup>35</sup> *D.C.C.*, 19 September 1825.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 December 1825.



by Yeatman's concerns for rising crime in Dorset. In the week preceding his very public support for railways and machinery, The Vale of Blackmore Association for the Protection of Property and the Prosecution of Crime was established in the Sherborne area of northern Dorset. This was precisely the area that Yeatman argued would be the first to be industrialised. The first President of the Association was Harry Farr Yeatman.<sup>37</sup>

James Frampton's rejection of machinery (and Yeatman's support for private property) was predicated on an absolute belief in the superiority of natural laws which governed the rural social hierarchy. Frampton employed the categories of 'peasantry' and 'villagers' and 'gentlemen' rather than the threefold class definitions of political economy. This was precisely because natural laws were held by the gentry to be inoperative amongst the shifting alliances and the city bred, calculating expediency of the urban classes; the classes of men Kenelm Digby had so memorably identified as 'the savage, envious haters of all superiority'.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, from about 1790 the Dorset gentry were increasingly intermixing the discourses of natural laws and political economy to allocate people to the same collective groups or classes, the upper classes, the middle classes, the working classes.<sup>39</sup> How could this be otherwise? In the words of E. P. Thompson, political economy emerged in the eighteenth century 'not as the ideology of some manufacturing lobby, not as the intellectual yarn turned out by cotton mills, but in the great agricultural corn-belt'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 April 1825.

<sup>38</sup> Chapter three.

<sup>39</sup> Chapters three and seven.

<sup>40</sup> E.P. Thompson, 'The Peculiarities of the English' in E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (1978), p. 254.

By the end of the war with France in 1815, however, the gentry believed that the terms and principles of political economy were in thrall to the manufacturers, to a method of production and a political interest hostile to agriculture. As we have seen in Stevenson's *General View*, these natural laws of political economy identified the county partly as the site of non-discretionary, natural competition. They opened up the possibility of commercially and intellectually proportionate rewards and the probability of instability and change. We also detected a fracture in Stevenson's inscription of the benefits of the natural freedoms of the market in his identity of Dorset. He celebrated the stability of the social and cultural norms of a Dorset society comprised of independent petty producers and at the same time argued for the economic and intellectual satisfactions of large scale, competitive farming. This fracture represented the gentry's understanding that political economy was an historic outgrowth of agricultural production. This fracture also represented a reluctance to use terms that had been appropriated by manufacturers and others to allow them to encroach upon the political and economic interests of agriculture. These new interpretations were resisted in Dorset and opened up a more general discussion about the process of industrialisation, free trade and the fate of the agricultural sector. Summing up a decade of turbulence and change in Dorset in 1830, the editor of the *Dorset County Chronicle* put it thus. 'The probable key to all our present difficulties is, no doubt, a combination of those several evils produced by an unwise application of principles of political economy, very wise and proper in themselves, but dangerous in the hands of those who have used them unskilfully.'<sup>41</sup> In drawing a distinction between the skilful and unskilful usages of political

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<sup>41</sup> *D.C.C.*, 7 January 1830.



economy the editor pointed to the error of imagining that any society could be built on a trade in commerce alone. He wrote:

Any system of political economy, which is built on the unstable and uncertain ground of foreign commerce, which excludes Agriculture, or at least makes her subordinate in the general calculation, virtually destroys the very principles of national prosperity, and commits the same error as led to the speedy destruction of Tyre, Sidon, Carthage and other commercial cities, which depended wholly upon the adventitious aid of foreign commerce, to the neglect of agriculture, and are now a heap of ruins.<sup>42</sup>

We have been returned again to the city. The gentry's view of the present, and of the future also, was therefore inevitably premised on a sense of ever present threat and crisis. And threats were defined as any form of behaviour which seemed to deny the truths of the organic inheritance. Between 1790 and 1815 the encroaching enemy had been French revolutionaries and imperialists but thereafter the denial of the truths of the organic inheritance came from within Britain. In particular, the gentry's idea of the county and their own self-identities were threatened by the British State. The State's support for Dissenters, Catholics and a reform of parliament further entrenched the political interests of urban culture and industrial political economy against the interests of rural culture and agriculture.<sup>43</sup> These threats continued to surface as tensions between and within competing ideas and identities of Dorset. They may be seen in the contrasting attitudes towards the condition of unchangeable constancy inscribed within the gentry's identity of Dorset. The idea of constancy embodied in the gentry's ideas of local and social

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Chapter three.

attachments were given legal force in a poor person's entitlement to a settlement. This idea of immobility was anathema to the principles of the natural laws of political economy and created a tension at the heart of the identity of Dorset as the location of unchanging traditional values and virtues. Giving evidence on the issue of the abolition of the laws of settlement to the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal in 1847, the reverend Anthony Huxtable of Sutton Waldron rehearsed these tensions in the following language:

I have thought of it (abolishing settlement); and it occurred to me that there would be one great advantage, that you would enlarge the sphere of the labourer's choice, that he would have a better market to take himself to; on the other hand, the objection that presented itself to me was this, whether it would not loosen that interest which landlords now feel with regard to their parishioners, and dissolve those ties which bind persons brought up in a certain place, the remains perhaps of the feudal system, at all events local attachment, whether a national settlement would not tend entirely to abolish that. I have not come to a satisfactory result.<sup>44</sup>

As Huxtable's comments suggest, the condition of unchangeable constancy that the gentry had inscribed within their identity of Dorset during the eighteenth century remained influential in the nineteenth. Their ideas of the intense local and social attachments formed in the past - 'the remains perhaps of the feudal system' - however attenuated by the discourses of political economy, continued to reach forward into the future. The identity of Dorset as a model of the patriarchal household - 'which bind persons brought up in a certain place' - were tenacious

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<sup>44</sup> *P.P.*, S.C. on Settlement and Poor Removal (1847, XI), pp. 553-54.



during the first half of the nineteenth century. Appeals continued to be made to the cultural and historical significance of the ties that bind even after their patriarchal rationalities had been denied by the notion of free contracts between farmers and labourers. These local and social attachments were intense indeed. They were low wages, subsidised house rents, potato grounds and all the other devices which bound the nineteenth century labourer to the soil with the economic shackles of dependency.

The gentry inventors of the idea of Dorset as a model of the patriarchal household made appeals to a fictitious history and a sense of belonging to a land and landscape which remains tenacious and continues to be influential. In her book *A Land*, the renowned writer on Dorset, Jacquetta Hawkes, described the relationship between place, belonging, time and consciousness in the following terms:

It is this immense antiquity that gives *our land* its look of confidence and peace, its power to give both rest and inspiration. When returning from hill or moor one looks down on a village, ones destination, swaddled in trees, and with only the church tower breaking the thin blue layer of evening smoke, *the emotion* it provokes is as precious as it may be common place. *Time that has caressed this place* until it lies as comfortably as a favourite cat in an armchair, *caresses* also even *the least imaginative beholders* (my emphasis).<sup>45</sup>

‘Our Land’; ‘the emotion’; ‘Time that has caressed this place’: these are some of the tenacious terms of the gentry’s idea of history, the gentry’s idea of Dorset, the gentry’s idea of belonging which reach out to caress ‘the least imaginative

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<sup>45</sup> J. Hawkes, *A Land* (1959), p. 168.

beholders'. We may put it more strongly than this and say these ideas *ensnare* 'the least imaginative beholders'. This chapter will now continue by showing how this gentry constructed identity of Dorset informs (ensnares) and defines much of the work of Barbara Kerr who remains the most influential twentieth century historian of eighteenth and nineteenth century Dorset. The chapter will conclude by comparing the gentry's idea of Dorset with some of the realities it concealed or denied.

The gentry's construction of an idea of Dorset as an unchanging rural, community of belonging can be summed up in the single word "traditional". The discourses through which the gentry constructed Dorset as a traditional society continue to be influential. Many of the social histories of Dorset which refer indirectly to the contest between oeconomy and economy in the county have adopted a historical schema which postulates an identity of the county as a traditional society. Definitions of its typologies vary but much emphasis has been placed on associating the idea of a traditional society with a ruling class of gentry landowners more concerned with financing levels of personal consumption than with modernising their estates; with tenant farmers wedded to outdated farming practices; and with identifying a submissive labouring class. This tripartite social structure was marked by rigid social distinctions but governed by authoritarian paternalist social relations derived from a shared moral and social framework.<sup>46</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century this traditional society was gradually undermined and replaced by an idea of a modern Dorset in which the framework for the organisation of individuals and society was derived from the impersonal laws of the new science of political

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<sup>46</sup> K.P. Bawn, 'Social protest, Popular Disturbances, and Public Order in Dorset, 1790-1837' (PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1984), pp. 281-82.



economy. The periodisation of this transformation is said to have been completed by about 1870 and according to Kerr was located outside of the county in the activities of ‘those most respectable of revolutionaries’ the utilitarians.<sup>47</sup> This transformation entailed a shift from a view of society as composed of unequal classes but with common goals supervised from above to one in which society is a self-regulating mechanism where, to quote Barbara Kerr, ‘no one breaks who ought not to break’.<sup>48</sup>

Such a schema is tempting because it allows a solution to a perennial problem faced by historians at the mercy of their ignorance of what comes before their period of expertise; how do I characterise the history of the period I do not know? The usual solution to this problem is to characterise the earlier period as a pre-modern or traditional society and define its legal, political social and economic frameworks in a series of oppositions to what is claimed to be revealed by research of the process of modernisation in the succeeding period. These oppositions may be most clearly seen in the images, analogies and metaphors by which Barbara Kerr conceived an identity of eighteenth and early nineteenth century Dorset as a traditional society. Her conception of Dorset as a backward looking, traditional society were much influenced by the works of William Cobbett and the fiction of Thomas Hardy with its constant references to the power of place as an agent to root people in the soil of their birthplaces.<sup>49</sup> Her characterisation of the lives of gentry and aristocratic landowners as bounded by their backward looking adherence to selfish traditions, condemned to misjudge and therefore refuse the opportunities of modernity may

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<sup>47</sup> B. Kerr, *Bound to the Soil, A Social History of Dorset, 1750-1918* (1968), p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘Index’ where Kerr includes a total of thirteen references to the works of Thomas Hardy and a total of twelve references to William Cobbett. Only the works of Arthur Young, with fifteen references, exceeded these totals.



also be found in Henry Fielding's portrayal of Squires Allworthy and Western in *Tom Jones* in the 1740s.<sup>50</sup> It may also be found in Macaulay's extended discussion of the provincialism and intellectual clumsiness of the Tory gentry in his *History of England* in the 1850s.<sup>51</sup> Much as Stevenson had done a century and a half before her, Kerr constructed an identity of Dorset in a series of oppositions between backward and progressive farming. Thus the 'buccaneering spirit' of the flax spinner Richard Roberts in the management of his mill in Burton Bradstock is contrasted with the 'croaking farmers' who supplied his raw materials.<sup>52</sup> The improving spirit exemplified by Roberts is an echo of Hardy's fictional Michael Henchard in his dealings with farmers. Henchard's energetic ambition, which enabled him to make the transition from a hay-trusser via a corn factor to become Mayor of Casterbridge is contrasted favourably with the diffidence of Joseph Poorgrass, 'an awkward gift for a man' who stands as her exemplar of the poorly paid Dorset labourers.<sup>53</sup> The awkward diffidence of Poorgrass in *Far From the Madding Crowd* is represented in her striking portrait of an isolated labourer with his head down clearing a muddy ditch by hand. This labourer hears the crack of a whip and looks up to witness the swift passage of a well-dressed carter in his trap, along a metalled road.<sup>54</sup> This image and metaphor connotes Kerr's schema of the transition from traditional society. The differences between traditional society and its modern successor are represented by the distance in space and time between the slowly toiling mud spattered labourer in the ditch and the carter on the metalled road, speeding to his destination in his pony and trap. Here is a celebration of

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<sup>50</sup> H. Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones*, 2 vols (1962 edn.), vol. 1, pp. 3-4, 32, 249-251.

<sup>51</sup> T.B. Macaulay, *History of England to the Death of William III*, vol. 1 (1967 edn.), pp. 250-60.

<sup>52</sup> Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, pp. 10, 80.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*



machinery, mechanisation and quite literally horsepower over the stick-in-the-mud, traditional ways of men solely dependent on the power of their muscles.

Kerr's presentation of Dorset as a traditional society was also premised on the assumption that the period 1790 to 1840 was an age of crises by which the county, its peoples and institutions were transformed. This seems the least controversial of statements and the work of many historians exploring such diverse fields as religious beliefs, class, politics and economics provide ample demonstrations of how the old enmities between the city and the countryside, science and superstition, providential theology and utilitarianism, voters and non-voters, the 'people' and Old Corruption were gradually resolved in favour of what may be loosely termed progressive forces of change. Describing Dorset during this same period, Barbara Kerr portrayed these crises as a triumph for progressive forces and a victory for common sense at a time when the 'life-force' of the county had been imperilled by the maintenance of inappropriate social, political and economic systems. In a striking physiological analogy she explained, 'Change in social and economic patterns is the life force in any healthy society; the danger comes when men believe that certain moral qualities are inseparable from a particular system and cannot be practiced under any other.'<sup>55</sup> The analogy is significant both in its explicit claim for a positive association between health and progressive change and for its implicit association of the idea of crisis with certain critical moments as they were alleged to have decisively shaped Dorset's identity.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century commentators, however, intended their elaborate metaphors and analogies of crises to represent rather more than the immediate

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

events of a particular critical moment. Their metaphors and analogies were also illustrative of what we might more properly describe as the process of modernisation. Take, for example, the editorial of the first edition of *The Pamphleteer* published in 1813:

No sooner has any great political, moral or scientific question elicited from the collision of conflicting sentiments innumerable sparks of light branching out in all directions, and illustrating the subject in every possible point of view, than another argument of equal importance arrests in its turn the public attention, and the many bright and valuable hints struck out in the course of its predecessor are disregarded; and, like meteors rather than stars, they cease to exist the moment they cease to shine.<sup>56</sup>

There is little sense of predictability in this cosmological metaphor of change, and what marks the analysis is not so much the material events themselves but the dynamic dissolving power they represented. The identity of eighteenth and early nineteenth century Dorset society as backward looking, isolated and insulated from the social, economic and political changes experienced by the majority of early nineteenth century English society owes much to the gentry's propaganda to deny the dissolving power of the processes of change which confronted them.

The gentry's propaganda has been represented by historians of Dorset as the facts of the past. These facts have become part of an orthodoxy which also asserts that the 'fever of emigration' was general in the county only after 1841. It is said that large scale migrations to other parts of England and Wales occurred from the 1870s when Dorset was finally fully integrated within the national rail network. The

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<sup>56</sup> *The Pamphleteer*, 1 (March, 1813), p. vii.



origins of this orthodoxy in the works of Thomas Hardy has been revealed by John Barrell and challenged by P. J. Perry in his analysis of surnames. Perry has demonstrated that the growing out-migration from Dorset which Hardy located in the 1870s had in fact started forty years earlier.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, the orthodoxy of closed and immobile village communities continue to be validated by the oft quoted observation of the reverend Anthony Huxtable that 'In Dorset we very much vegetate where we are born, and live very close indeed'.<sup>58</sup> At its most extreme this orthodoxy asserts that politics and class were alien concepts in early nineteenth century Dorset and that most people lived out their lives in ignorance and superstition.<sup>59</sup> This orthodoxy has been used to imply a larger truth: that a people which was 'bound to the soil' and experienced no industrial revolution is good evidence that Dorset was an isolated backwater insulated from the main currents of change experienced by the growing industrial centres of the midlands and north of England.<sup>60</sup> In fact, Dorset was never an isolated backwater in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the consequences of the industrial revolution had profound social and cultural effects within the county.

Dorset agriculture, commerce and industry had been developing trade links with national and international markets since at least the sixteenth century. A. K. Copus has convincingly demonstrated that by 1700 at the latest agricultural production in Dorset was geared to the demands of an integrated regional market which encompassed the whole of the south and south-west of England. In particular, the

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<sup>57</sup> J. Barrell, 'Geographies of Hardy's Wessex', *J.H.G.*, 8 (1982); P.J. Perry, 'Working class isolation and mobility in rural Dorset, 1837-1936', *I.B.G.*, 46 (1969).

<sup>58</sup> *P.P.*, S.C. on Settlement and Poor Removal (1847, VIII-XI), p. 553.

<sup>59</sup> Bawn, 'Social Protest', pp. 225-26, 252.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 280-82.



variations in grain prices were closely synchronised with those of London.<sup>61</sup> By 1800, this integrated market included the expanding industrial cities of the midlands and north of England.<sup>62</sup> Economic integration imported a profound ideological significance to the city as the exemplar of the growing political and cultural power of industrial capital. It brought home to the gentry the fact that the countryside could no longer be maintained in splendid economic and social isolation but must shift to the rising fortunes of the city and of manufacturing. As we have seen, the gentry constituted their self-identities in opposition to the city, in particular the expanding industrial cities, as the source of hostile economic and political power.<sup>63</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century a network of turnpike roads and a coastal passage merchant marine carried the commercial and agricultural produce of the county to the British markets. Dorset's coastal shipping also transported human cargo around the coast of Britain and imported coal from the Yorkshire and Durham pits for sale onwards into southern and western Dorset. Coal from the Mendip pits in Somerset was hauled by wagon overland into northern and north-western Dorset.<sup>64</sup> An ocean going merchant marine carried the produce and products of the county to the countries of the Americas, Canada, Newfoundland and the Mediterranean basin of southern Europe, as well as the northern grain port of Dantzic and the Baltic timber ports.<sup>65</sup> Nearer to home, sheep, wool, cereals and dairy products were transported by land to the markets of the neighbouring counties

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<sup>61</sup> A.K. Copus, 'Changing Markets and the Response of Agriculture in South-West England, 1750-1900' (PhD thesis, University of Aberystwyth, 1986), p. 90.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Chapter three.

<sup>64</sup> Stevenson, *General View*, p. 438.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, D. Beamish, J. Dockerill, J. Hillier, *The Pride of Poole* (Poole, 1974); D. Beamish, J. Hillier, H. F. V. Johnstone, *Merchants and Mansions of Poole* (Poole, 1976); R. Good, *The Old Roads of Dorset* (Gillingham, 1940).



of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Devon and Somerset, and farther afield to the cattle markets of Smithfield in London, and by sea to the trading ports of Bristol, the Channel Islands and Ireland.<sup>66</sup> The clay mines of the Isle of Purbeck provided the raw materials for all of the major British potteries as well as the European potteries in Holland, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Denmark.<sup>67</sup> Purbeck and Portland stone was exported to rebuild many of London's public buildings and churches destroyed during the Great Fire of 1666 and subsequently to supply the eighteenth century country house building boom.<sup>68</sup> It is true that the railways did not penetrate the county until 1847 and only then to connect a handful of towns and the port of Poole to the expanding national network. It is also the case that Dorset lay at the end of some extremely long internal lines of communications. It would be a mistake, however, to deduce from this remoteness that Dorset was isolated from the economic, political and cultural changes in the nations underway in London and the burgeoning industrial centres of the midlands and north of England.

Dorset's economy was profit oriented and both goods and capital were placed in the most lucrative markets. It is impossible to put a figure to the total returns of agriculture and trade during this period but allowing a positive relationship between savings and profits, in 1835 Dorset had the highest ratio of investments to depositors in savings banks of any county. The average amount invested in England and Wales was a fraction over £30, in Dorset that average stood at £40.<sup>69</sup> And capital, like cereals, wool and beef, was traded in an international as well as the national economy. Profits from farming and commerce in Dorset, as well as speculative

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<sup>66</sup> W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Dorset*, 3 vols (1908), vol. 2, pp. 275-86.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 363-65; and Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1. p. 95.

<sup>68</sup> Beamish (et al), *Merchants and Mansions*, pp. 23-27.

<sup>69</sup> *P.P.*, Accounts and Papers, Savings Banks (1837, XLIX), pp. 10-11.



gains made in the London money market, helped to finance the rebuilding of the shattered European economies after the ending of the French wars in 1815. A portion of those profits also funded the newly independent South American republics after the collapse of the Spanish empire. With the certain prospect of free trade in Corn, and the reality of a free trade in manufactures, some at least of Dorset's landowners invested their surplus capital in the protected industrial markets of the United States.<sup>70</sup>

Dorset agriculture and commerce also invested in the so-called industrial revolution in Britain. For example, the railway boom of the late 1830s and 1840s was financed partly from the profits of farming and trade in Dorset. In a five year period from 1837 to 1842, more than £400,000 was invested in the building of 45 separate railway lines.<sup>71</sup> Profits from farming were also reinvested in Dorset. Part and parcel of improving the profitability of both farming and commerce was the upgrading of internal communications to facilitate the movement of people and produce within and out of the county. Between 1752 and 1840, 24 separate private Acts of Parliament facilitated the construction, improvement and extension of 33 toll roads and branches, requiring an annual expenditure on maintenance of over £25,000 by the mid-1840s, a sum exceeded by only 17 counties in England; and by 1844 tolls yielded a total annual income of £26,274.<sup>72</sup>

Nineteenth century Dorset was neither exclusively rural and agricultural, nor was it an isolated backwater. Challenges to the gentry's identity of Dorset as a traditional

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<sup>70</sup> D.R.O., D/WLC/C194: Weld Estate, Correspondence, 1839-56. Undated copy papers concerning investments in The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co.; The Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad Co.; The Maryland and New York Iron and Coal Co.; The Mount Savage Ironworks.

<sup>71</sup> *P.P.*, Accounts and Papers, Railway Subscription Contracts (1837, XLVIII), pp. 89-387; (1845, XL), pp. 154-691; (1846, XXXVIII), pp. 2-320.

<sup>72</sup> *P.P.*, Abstract of the General Statement of the income and expenditure of the several Turnpike Trusts in England and Wales for the year 1844 (1846, XL).



society also came from the consequences of demographic growth. The increase of population had profound social and economic effects. It continued a trend to greater geographical mobility, to migration in search of work and to changes within occupational status. Despite emigration from the county its population grew steadily from 115,319 in 1801, to 177,000 by mid century. Its centres of urban population were certainly not large by the standards of other counties. For example, Poole, the largest town in 1801, contained 4761 people and only 18 other towns and places had populations greater than 1,000. Nevertheless, 35.5 per cent of the county's population lived in these towns and places. During the thirty years between 1801 and 1831, Dorset's population continued to grow from 115,319 to 150,400, an increase of some 30 per cent. During the same period urban populations, principally as a consequence of immigration from rural areas within the county, grew by over 81 per cent. In 1831 almost half of Dorset's population was concentrated in 28 parishes, towns and boroughs of more than 1,000 people. In contrast, population in rural parishes grew by only a little over 4.5 per cent.<sup>73</sup>

In the 1801 Census, 30 parishes in Dorset were returned as exclusively agricultural while the populations of 42 parishes were recorded as predominantly engaged in trade, manufacturing or handicrafts. In total, 28,204 individuals were recorded as employed in agriculture, and 22,259 others in a variety of trades. The 1811 Census recorded occupations by family and showed that approximately 71,000 individuals were engaged in agriculture with a further 53,042 employed in trade, manufacturing and handicrafts. By 1831 these categories included 94,176 and 65,183 persons respectively, and 40 parishes were described as being exclusively agricultural in

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<sup>73</sup> *P.P.*, Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831 (1831, XVIII).



character and 32 others designated as chiefly engaged in trade.<sup>74</sup> This data should be treated with care because in many large towns, villages and parishes in rural Dorset dual occupations in agriculture and trade or industry were a feature of economic activity throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>75</sup> It is often assumed, however, that agriculture was pre-eminent in this partnership and that trade was most usually only of secondary importance to the economies of those families and individuals who straddled an occupational divide. Indeed, the growth in the numbers of those competing in trade after 1830 in Dorset has been causally related to a decline in agricultural incomes.<sup>76</sup> This growth is more apparent than real, however, and the increase in the numbers of those returned as employed in trade, manufacture or industry in the 1831 census over those recorded in 1821 are due to a change in the method of recording. As a result the numbers engaged in trade and manufacturing in Dorset were underestimated prior to 1831. The report of the 1831 census provides an explanation. Census returns prior to 1831 classified occupations under the broad headings of agricultural, trade, manufacture or handicraft, together with idleness or no employment at all. This classification took no account of the large proportion of men and women who worked only intermittently at particular occupations. The 1831 census calculated that 18 per cent of families worked occasionally in trade and manufacture or agriculture at harvest or cultivated their own gardens. For most of the year these families were employed by the parish in quarries or in making roads. The overseers who were responsible for enumerating their districts in 1811 and 1821 classified these families mostly as in agricultural employment with a smaller number

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<sup>74</sup> *P.P.*, Abstract of Answers and Returns of the Population of Great Britain in 1831 (1831, VI).

<sup>75</sup> Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, pp. 132-33.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.



in trade and manufacture rather than denoting them as idle or not employed at all. In the 1831 Census, however, a distinct category was assigned to useful labour of whatever kind. As a result the 18 per cent of families who had been placed under an agricultural or trade and manufacture classification in earlier census returns were now designated as performing useful labour. By this new classification the larger numbers of families earlier reported as employed wholly in agriculture was proportionately reduced more than the numbers in trade and manufacture in 1831.<sup>77</sup> This new classification gave the appearance of a transfer of people from the agricultural to the manufacturing sector of the Dorset economy.

As the capital of landowners and farmers circulated extensively within Dorset and the wider national and international economies, so was a significant proportion of the county's population also mobile. Although evidence of extensive labour mobility within the county has been available for a quarter of a century, little notice has been taken of inter-county migrations, or emigration and none at all of the political significance of mobility. Dorset had been a front-line county throughout the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. In May 1804, for example, one third of the male population aged between 17 and 55 were willing to volunteer or were already serving in the armed forces. A majority of the volunteers were also prepared to serve anywhere in their military district, in other words outside of the county.<sup>78</sup> But if the mobility of some of its population during the war years was a special case, enforced and centrally directed, internal labour mobility and relatively large out-migrations, were also a usual feature of social and economic life in Dorset during

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<sup>77</sup> *P.P., Accounts and Papers, Abstract of the Population Returns of Great Britain, (1833, XXXVI), pp. 98-215.*

<sup>78</sup> L. Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (1992), pp. 401, 405.



this period. George Body's analysis of removals under the old poor laws demonstrates the existence of widespread, albeit short distance, labour mobility within and without the county. This only gradually reduced after 1815 before tailing off more steeply from the early 1820's and drastically after the implementation of the New Poor Law in Dorset in 1835.<sup>79</sup> Seasonal migration from northern and western Dorset, particularly from the Vale of Blackmore, to follow the harvest on the large cereal farms of central and eastern regions of the county was identified by Stevenson in 1812; and by the early 1840s this had been highly organised by some farmers and landowners and a series of barracks built to house the migrants.<sup>80</sup> Morgan points out the existence of an indigenous short-term migratory flow of men and women from the villages in the vale of Shaftesbury into the Fordingbridge area of Hampshire at harvest time.<sup>81</sup> Keith Snell's exhaustive researches of settlement examinations have revealed similar patterns of labour mobility in the other counties of southern England during this period.<sup>82</sup> There was also a steady influx of new blood into the county. The Census of 1851 recorded data on the birth places of the inhabitants of each parish in Britain. Between 1831 and 1851, 24,760 men women and children moved into the county, principally from the neighbouring counties of Somerset, Hampshire and Wiltshire; that is more than 1 in 7 of the population enumerated in 1851 had been born elsewhere. During the same period, however,

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<sup>79</sup> G.A. Body, 'The Administration of the Old Poor Laws in Dorset, 1760-1834: with special reference to agrarian distress' (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 1964), pp. 129-30.

<sup>80</sup> Stevenson, *General View*, pp. 433, 436; S.C. Settlement and Poor Removal (1847), p. 548.

<sup>81</sup> D.H. Morgan, *Harvesters and Harvesting, 1840-1900: A Study of the Rural Proletariat* (1982), p. 76.

<sup>82</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor. Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 335, 337-39.



some 44,000 men women and children left the county, the majority of whom migrated to Hampshire and London.<sup>83</sup>

The inroads of Dissenting religions provided yet another challenge to the Gentry's idea of Dorset as an Anglican preserve. The self-styled respectable dissenting denominations, the Baptists, Congregationalists, Unitarians and Quakers had established themselves in Dorset from the early years of the seventeenth century and by the nineteenth century had attracted many adherents from the members of the commercial and trading classes in Dorset.<sup>84</sup> They were part of functioning wider regional and national organisations which were sufficiently confident to press the claims of the whole Protestant dissenting church against the power and authority of Anglicanism. In 1830 for instance, the Dorset Association of the General Congregational Union argued that the privileged theological and constitutional position of the Anglican Church should be overturned and supported motions for its disestablishment.<sup>85</sup>

Methodism organised rather later in Dorset than elsewhere in England. Nevertheless as a religion of the fields and cottages it began to attract adherents in Dorset from the time of Wesley's tour of the county in the 1740s. Organised Wesleyan Methodist and Primitive Methodist circuits were put in place from the beginning of the nineteenth century in Dorset. The Stour Valley circuit, centred on Poole and the Isle of Purbeck in southern Dorset was in place at the end of the eighteenth century. A separate Poole Circuit was established in 1820. The Sherborne Wesleyan circuit was formed in 1818, although a

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<sup>83</sup> *P.P. Accounts and Papers, Census of Great Britain, 1851, Part 1(1852-53, LXXXVIII).*

<sup>84</sup> Appendix D.

<sup>85</sup> D.R.O., NP1.21: Minutes of the Dorset Association of the General Congregational Union, 26 November 1830.

Wesleyan chapel had been licensed in the town as early as 1795. Primitive Methodism seems to have organised first on Portland in 1818 and in Shaftesbury and Gillingham in 1827. But each of these formal organisations had been preceded by an informal preaching structure, although often without the benefit of proper chapels.<sup>86</sup> Official returns show that between 1754 and 1836, 273 Dissenters' meeting houses and Roman Catholic Chapels had been registered in Dorset.<sup>87</sup> And by 1836 Dissenting religions and Roman Catholic adherents could be found in almost 30 per cent of Dorset's parishes with Wesleyan Methodism attracting adherents in 49 parishes, and Primitive Methodism established in 24 parishes<sup>88</sup> The chapel, the Dissenting meeting house and Methodists generally were an affront to the self-identities of the gentry which embodied the liberties of Protestant constitution.<sup>89</sup> John Brown, a Methodist lay preacher revealed the extent of the encroachments of Dissent in Wareham, where by 1836 Dissenters outnumbered members of the established church 688 to 285. As a triumphant celebration of the power of Methodism and a reminder of the weakness of the Anglican church he turned back on the gentry the dismissive and patronising terms with which they characterised Dissenters. Brown described the triumph of:

The bald Atheist, the sneering Infidel, the "Idolatrous Papist", the "Socinian with blasphemy inscribed on his brow" as you say, the dreaming Swedenborgian, the visionary disciple of Johanna Southcote, the sacrament denying Quaker, the sturdy impracticable Independant, the tough Ranter, the

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<sup>86</sup> Appendix D.

<sup>87</sup> *P.P.*, A Return of the Number of Registered Dissenting Meeting-Houses and Roman Catholic Chapels in England and Wales (1836, XL), p. 269.

<sup>88</sup> Appendix D.

<sup>89</sup> Chapter three.



spasmodic Jumper, the isolated Baptist, the well drilled and half pliable Wesleyan, the mystic unintelligible Irvingite etc., etc.’<sup>90</sup>

Many years later George Howell illustrated the continuation of the Dorset gentry’s attitudes when commenting on the case of Tolpuddle labourers. Methodism was, he said, ‘a shocking offence...in many villages, especially in Dorset and the other West counties. Indeed, next to poaching, it was the gravest of all offences’.<sup>91</sup> The gentry may have been prepared to give their qualified support to a free trade in labour and farm produce but many of them resisted a free trade in religious sentiments.

The gentry’s identification of their power, property and privileges as a service to the poor and their identity of the history of Dorset as a chosen land of traditional patriarchal Protestant values did not depend for their effectiveness on their being true. Large numbers of Dorset’s Protestant poor also were taught to believe the gentry’s view of an immobile past with intense local and social attachments because their everyday relations suggested it to them. These everyday relations were bounded by their experiences of the village or the parish and in the following chapter this case-history will explore how the gentry constructed ideas of belonging.

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<sup>90</sup> D.R.O., PE/SH AL 2/24: John Brown, *A Second Letter to the Rev. Alfred Daniel on the Trinitarian Bible Society* (Poole, 1836).

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1986edn), p. 437.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *From Civil Parish To Organic Community: The gentry and ideas of belonging*

The parish was the primary unit of local government in the countryside. Its vestry was empowered to raise money through a variety of local rates and responsible for the maintenance of the parish church, poor relief, a substantial part of elementary education, policing, and the repair of public bridges and highways.<sup>1</sup> The Established Church also exercised responsibilities in the parish. The incumbent and his vestry were responsible to make provision for maintaining the services and fabric of the parish church in pursuit of Anglicanism's spiritual responsibility for the cure of souls. The parish was also a unit of belonging. To belong to a parish, by birth, employment, or a variety of other legal claims, was formative in the experiences of its parishioners. Their formative experiences were interpreted, ordered and articulated by ideas of belonging. In the older terms of patriarchal oeconomy the parish was the source of communally sanctioned rights to subsistence. In the newer emerging terms of market rationality, this older idea was modified by a discourse which identified the parish as a place of individual striving and responsibility, an arena of moral endeavour. This chapter will analyse the gentry's definitions and usages of these terms to explore their competing prescriptions for the proper political, social and economical organisation of the parish. These prescriptions most famously included the gentry's different ideas of the proper role of poor relief in the life of the parish and the poor. And the old poor laws, to paraphrase Snell, provide a

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<sup>1</sup> The classical discussion is S. and B. Webb, *History of English Local Government. The Parish and the County*, (1906).



most important entry to the ideas of the parish and an understanding of why the Dorset gentry reconstructed ideas of belonging during this period.<sup>2</sup> Ideas of the parish and belonging would be constructed also in the terms of the gentry's self-identities as a means to manage and control the modernisation of Dorset's rural society.

The idea of the village or the parish as an organic community of belonging has been a key concept in the developing historiography of English social life. Historians and social anthropologists who have explored the transformation of rural England during the nineteenth century, have suggested how the idea of belonging could have been fostered. For example, Howard Newby has argued that capitalist landowners promoted the idea of community in the nineteenth century by converting their exercise of power into a service for those they ruled:

By cultivating an identification with locality, and then by defining the relationships within the locality as those of social harmony, amity and affection, it was possible to use the "limited horizons" of the village dweller to protect him from the possibly corrupting influences of alternative definitions of the situation from the outside.<sup>3</sup>

Newby's arguments are an elegant restatement of more robust and contrasting terms employed by Hobsbawm and Rude in *Captain Swing*. They present the idea of the organic community as a ruling class device to maintain economic inequalities and secure authoritarian, hierarchical work and social structures. Parishes were not communities, they argued, if by that word one implies 'that the ties of locality

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<sup>2</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor. Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> H. Newby, *The Deferential Worker* (1977), p. 46.



prevailed over those of class. Or rather, they were communities only within the limits of the village poor'.<sup>4</sup>

This community of belonging and the extremely local identities it sustained was created in large measure by the developing responsibility of the civil parish for the organisation of the poor law. The parish as a civil institution in Dorset had first assumed significance during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The rise of the civil parish was consequent on the Elizabethan poor laws and the legal responsibilities placed on parish institutions and officers to maintain the poor. The idea of the parish as a territorial unit developed with the growth in numbers of applicants for poor relief. This growth required the construction of fixed parish boundaries and administrative structures to confine and manage responsibility for the burden of providing for the poor. Only those with a settlement in a particular parish (through birth, employment, or a variety of other legal claims) could expect to receive poor relief there.<sup>5</sup> The administrative structures of the old poor laws in Dorset have been extensively described by Body, and it is not my intention to rehearse his interpretations here.<sup>6</sup> I want rather to explore how the Dorset gentry constructed their responsibilities for the poor as a means to define relationships to place within ideas of the parish and belonging.

The gentry and their allies in Dorset interpreted the county's history to recreate an idealised view of their role in creating and sustaining a harmonious community of

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<sup>4</sup> E. Hobsbawm and G. Rude, *Captain Swing: A social history of the great English agricultural uprising of 1830* (1985 edn.), p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> The historiography of the old poor law is extensive. Bibliographies of the secondary literature published before the early nineteen-seventies may be found in J.D Marshall, *The Old Poor Law, 1795-1834* (1968); M.E. Rose, *The Relief of Poverty, 1834-1914* (1972); and G.W. Oxley, *Poor Relief in England and Wales, 1601-1834* (Plymouth, 1974), pp. 141-42. For references to later works see: Snell, *Annals*, pp. 104-37.

<sup>6</sup> G.A. Body, 'The Administration of the Old poor laws in Dorset, 1760-1834: with special reference to agrarian distress' (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 1964).



belonging that emphasised the rights and obligations of all its members.<sup>7</sup> The mythic sources of harmonious social relations in the parish were often deduced from the historic origins of the civil parish. For instance, the Reverend Sydney Godolphin Osborne, rector of Durwestone, argued that stability and harmony were consequent on the transformation of the parish into a civil institution during the seventeenth century. He deduced this from the historical records which showed that the parish authorities in Dorset had once been the willing agents of economic policies decided at the court of Quarter Sessions. Harmony and stability resulted because the gentry's uniform ideas of community had been voluntarily devolved by them onto the parish authorities by the magistrates at quarter sessions. A near perfect equivalence of governing purpose had therefore existed between the quarter sessions and the civil parish. This equivalence was maintained by translating the gentry's ideas of community, customs and traditions into the duties of the vestry and parish officers. As a result the economic rights of the poor had been protected and cherished by those in positions of power and authority. He illustrated his deduction by quoting an order of the Dorset Quarter Sessions of the 2 May 1635. This order concerned the rights of the poor to glean<sup>8</sup> (one of the touchstones of 'community' and 'belonging' in the early nineteenth century):

Wherefore the Court, being desirous to reform these abuses, and to the end that offenders in that kind may receive punishment, constables &c. be directed and defended in their just doing; the honest and painful

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<sup>7</sup> Chapter five.

<sup>8</sup> For gleaning generally, see D. Morgan, *Harvesters and Harvesting* (1982); P.J. King, 'Gleaners, Farmers and the Failure of Legal Sanctions in England, 1780-1850', *P&P.*, 125 (November, 1989); B. Bushaway, *By Rite* (1982), pp. 138-148.

husbandman comforted and encouraged, and aged, weake, and infirm poore restored to and maintayned in their just and lawful right of gleaning.<sup>9</sup>

His appeals to history were rooted in Biblical authority and older patriarchal ideas of the obligation of the rich for the poor. A 'just and lawful right of gleaning' could be justified by reference to Ruth, 'I pray you, let me gleane and gather after the reapers amongst the sheaves'.<sup>10</sup> He compared this lost association between legitimate authority, harmony and place unfavourably with the 'tyranny and cruelty' of the 'parochial system' of the early nineteenth century. In particular he railed against the provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act, which 'dislocated in every social point' the agricultural labourer and his dependants.<sup>11</sup> As Osborne's objections to the New Poor Law and references to the labourer and his dependants suggest, these older ideas of custom and immemorial practice were being redefined by laws created elsewhere. The law was the influential instrument in enforcing a redefinition of customary ideas and expectations in the terms of market rationality. In 1788, Mr Justice Heath sitting with Mr Justice Wilson and others in the Court of Common Pleas put it like this:

The law of Moses is not obligatory on us. It is indeed agreeable to Christian charity and common humanity that the rich should provide for the impotent poor; but the mode of provision must be of positive institution. We have established a nobler fund. We have pledged all the landed property in the kingdom for the maintenance of the poor.

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<sup>9</sup> S.G. Osborne, *A View of the Low Moral and Physical Condition of the Agricultural Labourer* (1844). pp. 16-17.

<sup>10</sup> Ruth 2:7.

<sup>11</sup> Osborne, *A View*, pp. 4-5.



Mr Justice Wilson concurred with his colleague but in the explicit terms of capitalist rationality. It was his opinion that:

No right can exist at common law, unless both the subject of it, and they who claim it, are certain...The subject is the scattered corn which the farmer chooses to leave on the ground, the quantity depends entirely on his pleasure. The soil is his, the seed is his, and in natural justice his also are the profits.<sup>12</sup>

In the terms of that natural justice, the male breadwinner would be now designated as the patriarch of his family. He alone should be responsible for its subsistence.<sup>13</sup>

As Osborne had deduced, the developing civil parish was initially more directly under the supervision and direct control of quarter sessions in Dorset, and the ascendancy of quarter sessions had probably reached its high water mark during the interregnum. But his construction of an idealised parish glossed over the fact that the institutional identity of the civil parish had been established out of conflict at the expense of the older manorial authorities.<sup>14</sup> It was these older authorities, and not the civil parish that had been the repositories of his idealised notions of community. From the Restoration, however, the independence of parish authorities from the control of quarter sessions gradually increased. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Dorset quarter sessions directives to parish officers were more often honoured in the breach, a state of affairs that has been ascribed to the penetration of

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<sup>12</sup> *Steel v Houghton et Uxor* (1788), quoted in E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1993), p. 140.

<sup>13</sup> M. Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty. Toward a genealogy of liberal governance* (1991), pp. 216-17.

<sup>14</sup> Webb and Webb., *The Parish and the County*, pp. 364, 596.

the new capitalist ethos and its calculating commercial spirit, as well as to the lax and easygoing indifference to their governing responsibilities of many magistrates.<sup>15</sup>

The growing institutional identity of the parish had unwarranted consequences. Take for example, the issue of settlement and entitlement to relief. In law, every person had one parish, and one only, in which he or she had a settlement and a right to relief. Establishing a person's legal settlement created disputes and endless litigation between parishes. Increasing poverty made parochial authorities, the vestry, overseers and churchwardens, eager to maximise the income that could be raised from poor rates, and eager to limit their financial responsibilities for the poor. The gradual withdrawal of most magistrates from the day to day management of the poor allowed the parish authorities the political freedom to minimise disbursements to individual applicants.<sup>16</sup> The concerns of those who paid the poor rates could never be wholly reconciled with the interests of those who were an actual or potential charge upon them. The result was a social cleavage enshrined at the heart of the institutional identity of the parish. The divergence of interests between ratepayers and poor helped to change attitudes to the poor and the problem of poverty. Dorothy Marshall has noted that the poor laws in the sixteenth century operated to maintain the subsistence of the poor. This concern with what she termed 'the prevention of poverty' was gradually abandoned and during the eighteenth century, the poor law authorities became concerned 'to prevent a rise in the rates'.<sup>17</sup> It is possible to argue, therefore, that the rise of the civil parish and its association with administering poor relief was ultimately divisive.

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<sup>15</sup> S. Webb and B. Webb., *English Local Government. English Poor Law History*, vol. 1, pp. 149, 155, 197, 281, 424.

<sup>16</sup> Body, 'The Administration of the Old Poor Laws', pp. 92-94.

<sup>17</sup> D. Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century* (1926), p. 183.



A concern with economy in Dorset was increasingly evident after the widespread implementation of schemes to subsidise the costs of labour from the poor rates in the 1790's. The practical financial consequences of funding such schemes meant that cleavages also arose between different 'classes' of ratepayers. Many gentry landowners in Dorset adjusted their tenants' rents in proportion to the fluctuation in poor rates. This meant that the landowner sacrificed a proportion of his rental income and indirectly paid a proportion of the poor rates. As James Frampton said, this practice meant 'the value of the landowner's property is very much affected'.<sup>18</sup> As a result some landowners sought to transfer as large a proportion of poor rates as possible from their agricultural tenants to trade. Charles Ellis, an Ironmonger, has left us evidence about just such a practice in the parish of Wimborne. The gentry magistrate George Bankes was by far the largest landowner in the parish and his tenants were the majority on the open vestry. His direct influence on the vestry continually compelled alterations to the poor rates in favour of his tenant farmers. Ellis bitterly complained that Bankes was:

Such an opulent character...if meetings are held on any publick business, and should not accord with the wishes of Mr Bankes or his Stewards, the result is another meeting is called to rescind it, which has been done many times and which is accomplished by desiring the whole of his tenantry to appear and vote for its accomplishment.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries (1834, XXXII), Question 36: Evidence of James Frampton of Moreton.

<sup>19</sup> P.R.O., MH12/2911: Correspondence of the Wimborne Poor Law Union. Letter, Charles Ellis to P.L.C., 24 September 1834.

Cleavages were also apparent between those ratepayers who employed labourers and those who employed none. The Report of the Poor Law Commission described the cleavages thus:

Each vestryman, so far as he is an immediate employer of labour, is interested in keeping down the rate of wages, and throwing part of their payment on others, and, above all, on the principal object of parochial fraud, the tithe-owner: if he is the owner of cottages, he endeavours to get their rent paid by the parish; if he keeps a shop, he struggles to get allowance for his customers or debtors; if he deals in articles used in the workhouse, he tries to increase the workhouse consumption; if he is in humble circumstances, his own relations or friends may be among the applicants.<sup>20</sup>

These cleavages were well known to many Dorset ratepayers. As D. O. P. Okeden informed the Poor Law Commissioners in 1832, the reality of the parish was often an all too well known cabal of individual employers possessed of the power to make rates and to compel their payment. 'In the present state in a parish so ruled', he wrote, 'much favouritism must be looked for from the vestry, composed as it is of farmers, who would grant relief to their own labourers, without due regard to the claims and sufferings of other applicants'.<sup>21</sup> The favouritism of a vestry composed of the employers of labour operated especially against those small ratepayers who employed only family labour. Beginning during the 1790s in Dorset, this rural employing class began to use their power and ingenuity to implement allowance schemes. These schemes burdened the small ratepayer with part of the expense of

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<sup>20</sup> *P.L.R.*, (1834, XVII), p. 108.

<sup>21</sup> *Third Report*, p. 315.



paying the wage bills of the larger farmers.<sup>22</sup> Peter Marling, a grocer from Blandford complained, 'the little farmer or tradesman, who does his labour for himself, pays his poor rates to get the great man's work done'.<sup>23</sup>

To the landless, labouring poor the parish authorities could be miserly and laggardly in their legal responsibilities to serve and often tyrannical in their exactions. The poor often experienced the parish as a dependency on the poor rates or the roundsman ticket enforced by the law. In the aftermath of the riots of 1830-31 in Dorset an anonymous labourer observed bitterly:

The overseer sends me to work for those very farmers who refused to employ me voluntarily; to work on their farms and for their profit at a rate of pay of 6d a day. My natural sense of justice revolts at being required to the same work for 6d for which weaker men than myself, working by side, receive two shillings, because they have a wife and family. The overseer takes me before a magistrate for not doing as much work...and the magistrate commits me to gaol. Thus in every way I feel the severity of the law while its protection is in every way denied to me.<sup>24</sup>

The idea of the parish as an institution also became politically divisive. This was particularly so in those parishes where the majority of ratepayers were excluded from the vestry. In the borough of Poole, for example, the issue of who should govern the vestry became a major political issue during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The resulting conflict split ratepayers along party political lines

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<sup>22</sup> J.L. Hammond and B. Hammond, *The Village Labourer 1760-1832. A Study of the Government of England Before the Reform Bill* (1995 edn), pp. 148, 211-214, 229.

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O., MH32/69: Correspondence of the P.L.C. Letter, Peter Marling to P.L.C., 27 September 1834, as cited in the unpublished paper, M.J. Flame, 'Reprieved from the Scaffold: Rioters, Arsonists and Machine Breakers in Dorset, August 1830 - February 1831', Centre for the Study of Social History, University of Warwick, April, 1988, pp. 18-19.

<sup>24</sup> D.C.C., 12 January 1831, cited in Flame, 'Reprieved from the Scaffold', p. 20.



with the Whig faction supporting an open vestry. This party political conflict continued into the nineteenth century and was transformed by the issue of poor law reform. Whig voters were generally enthusiastic supporters of a reformed system of poor relief and their Tory opponents generally opposed to reform. During the years 1835 to 1839, the party political conflict between the Whigs and Tories in Poole came close to wrecking the implementation of the New Poor Law in the borough.<sup>25</sup>

The constant potential for conflict was an everyday reality of life in the civil parish. The process of deteriorating social relations in the countryside - what the Hammonds aptly described as 'the isolation of the poor'<sup>26</sup> - made the idea of the civil parish as the origin and locus of morality and stability increasingly vocal and central in the experiences of rich and poor in Dorset. To the powerful and wealthy gentry the civil parish was an arena in which to exercise their power and their prejudices to foster myths and fantasies of rural society. These myths and fantasies often achieved concrete expression in contemporary architecture.<sup>27</sup> The building and renovation of mansions and churches in Dorset during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was undertaken within an architectural tradition that emphasised order and harmony, duty and responsibility. Gothic and Palladian architectural styles emphasised Christian values of community and hierarchy. The incorporation of these symbolic languages into the architecture of mansion and church concealed the forces at work which threatened the disintegration of the order and harmony represented by them. Indeed, sometimes the buildings themselves were part of that process of disintegration. The tensions between symbolic

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<sup>25</sup> M.J. Flame, 'The Politics of Poor Law Administration in the Borough of Poole 1835-c.1845', *PDNHAS*, 108 (1986), p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> Hammond and Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> A. Oswald, *Country Houses of Dorset* (1935), p.17.



languages and the realities they concealed may be seen in the building activities of Humphrey Sturt and Joseph Damer, later the first Baron Damer of Dorchester. Sturt inherited the property of the Napier family in 1765. He spent thousands of pounds of his inheritance on improving his estate and building a monumental brick viewing tower in the parish of Horton. He also demolished the village of More Crichel, except for the church, to make way for a landscaped park and two one-hundred acre lakes. The villagers were not consulted and were forcibly moved lock stock and barrel to a new village called Newtown in the neighbouring parish of Witchampton. From the top of his tower Sturt enjoyed uninterrupted views of his newly extended and beautified possessions, unspoiled by the unsightly hovels of the poor of More Crichel. In a similar fashion, Joseph Damer demolished the village of Milton Abbas in 1786 and flooded the valley in which it had lain in order to construct an emparked lake. His erstwhile villagers were crammed into new properties up the hill in an outwardly model new village. These new buildings concealed a teeming slum in which in some cases twenty persons were crowded into one dwelling.<sup>28</sup>

Hutchins' History also located the origins of the parish in an idealised golden age in the past. These historical origins were a vanished age of chivalry in which the semi-legendary King Arthur and the historic King Alfred of Wessex had laid the moral, social and legal frameworks of Dorset society. In 1825, Charles Bowles' speech to the magistrates of the Sherborne Division referred directly to these origins. He claimed:

We who live in this place (Sherborne) may in truth say that we are indebted  
for our existence...to one of the wisest and best monarchs that ever wore the

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<sup>28</sup> J. Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset* (Blandford, 1874), vol. 3, pp. 132, 486-87; vol. 4, p. 397.

diadem of this kingdom...I mean no other than King Alfred, who was the founder of this place.<sup>29</sup>

Bowles made his speech during a campaign to preserve Sherborne's status to hold quarter sessions. The campaign was unsuccessful in the face of the political power of the magistrates in the Dorchester quarter session division.<sup>30</sup>

King Alfred may indeed have founded Sherborne but as the context of Bowles' speech and the activities of Damer and Sturt demonstrate, the civil parish was the site of a vastly unequal distribution of political and economic power. The reality of parish life was far removed from Osborne's and Bowles' idealised visions. The resurrection of an idea of belonging had therefore to reconcile these inequalities and represent them as the nature of things. These representations may be most clearly seen in the gentry's notions of legitimate interests or 'particular spheres' and ideas of place. Their interests and ideas were part of what Roberts has described as the wider intellectual revival of paternalist social theories that had been underway in England from the late eighteenth century.<sup>31</sup> The idea of particular spheres afforded rich and poor alike legitimate interests in the parish in which they lived or enjoyed property rights. In particular the interdependence of property and place was developed as a common theme in the resurrection of the parish to encourage what Coleridge would later term in the 1830's 'HOMEBORN FEELINGS'. Coleridge, like the Dorset gentry, elevated the interests of the landowners in a nostalgic fiction of the past where intense local and social attachments prevailed. Notwithstanding the power and intensity of local attachments he constructed the landowner as a

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<sup>29</sup> D.C.C., 14 March 1825.

<sup>30</sup> Chapter two.

<sup>31</sup> D. Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (1979), chapter two, *passim*.



responsible free agent able to effect reforms of his volition. He insisted that, 'All reforms or innovations not won from a free agent, which does not leave the merit of having effected it sacred to the individual proprietor, it were folly to propose or worse than folly to attempt.'<sup>32</sup> Here we have an accounting of Divine Providence that left the gentry free to determine the extent of their responsibility for the poor.<sup>33</sup> Coleridge's creation of a neo-Platonic idea of the landed estate as the source and model for a well-managed moral society contrasted favourably the ordered, moral, hierarchical and immobile village communities of the past to the modern disruptions that disordered or destroyed ideas of place. Dr Rudge, vicar of Hawkchurch, described the consequences of disruption in the terms of Coleridge's exhortation that every man must 'measure his efforts by his power and his sphere of action'. He argued that:

Character has little influence in a man whom the world considers, and teaches to consider himself, but as a portion of a map! To be sensible of characters man must feel himself a responsible character, man must feel himself a responsible individual: and to individualise the human being, not only must the reflective power be evolved and disciplined by education, but there must be property, or profession or political privilege, or something equivalent - a certain sphere of free-agency to make the man revere himself as a man, and respect the opinions of his fellow men.<sup>34</sup>

We may see in Rudge's reference to property the influence of one interpretation of political economy which defined labour as a species of property. This interpretation

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<sup>32</sup> S.T. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1829), p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Chapter six.

<sup>34</sup> *D.C.C.*, 7 January 1836.

had been made most explicit by magistrate D. O. P Okeden in a pamphlet on poor relief and labourers' wages. In this he divided a labourer's property in his work into what he termed its component parts of Time, Health, Youth and Strength. Like all property, each part had a monetary value which combined to create his wage share.<sup>35</sup>

Some idea of the popularity of Okeden's analysis may be gauged from the fact that the pamphlet ran to three separate editions during 1830. The idea of labour as property permitted the gentry to include the labouring poor within the idea of responsible free agents. Rudge's exhortation to 'individualise the human being' seems at first sight to be a rejection of the power of place as an agency of morality, in as much as it suggests the possibility that a legitimate sphere of action may be defined by the individual and not constrained by ideas of place. In proposing 'a certain sphere of free agency', however, Rudge was referring to what he implied to be the moral and psychological limbo of workplace economic relationships. His proposal for free agency addressed the issue of how men should be rescued from these demoralising relationships. These relationships taught men that they were nothing more than 'a portion of a map'. This cartographic metaphor is significant. It reminds us that in the sphere of economic organisation, English rural society had come to be characterised by exploitative economic relations. The consequence for rural social relations was an accelerating process of alienation and conflict.<sup>36</sup> Rudge had personal experience of the power of economic relations to subvert 'free agency'. During the riots of 1830 he had been amongst those landowners and tithe-owners

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<sup>35</sup> D.O.P. Okeden, *A Letter to Members in Parliament for Dorsetshire on the Subject of Poor Relief and Labourers' Wages* (Blandford, 1830), pp. 5-6.

<sup>36</sup> Hobsbawm and Rude, *Captain Swing*, pp. 39-40.



threatened with retribution for their role in exploiting the poor. An anonymous writer warned him:

Sir - wrote this to you to tell you if you don't loer your tythes you and all your prmies(sic) shall be burned on the 20 of som month in a short time, for we poor distress solls will not suffer no longer for your parsons and land-holders, and Mr Barnes shall be destroyed likewise, from your friend,  
SWING.<sup>37</sup>

Rudge's prescription to restore social harmony was to return to the small, self-sufficient society of petty producers. Like Coleridge, he was convinced that the primary sphere of moral relations was the 'small society'<sup>38</sup>, in this instance the parish rather than the landed estate. Rudge also implied that a moral society was one in which the process of production was organised in small units. In order, he wrote, 'to make the man revere himself as a man, and respect the opinions of his fellow men'. Two alternate parishes would be constructed from this debate on morality and locality. In the first, the ideal parish would be a self-sufficient, political entity governed by general economic laws but not regulated by impersonal and contingent contracts. In the second, the ideal parish was governed by natural economic laws which were both the guarantee and the corollary of natural moral laws.

In the first, ideal parish economic relations would reflect 'rights' and 'duties' evolved through time and sanctioned by practice. This parish promoted the labourers' claim to a right to a living wage and to employment as well as protecting the rights of small scale production against monopolistic capitalists. In the words of

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<sup>37</sup> Published in *The Times*, 23 December 1830.

<sup>38</sup> Coleridge, *On the Constitution*, pp. 55-56.

John Calcraft, 'these capitalists were the enemy of the labourer (and) the formidable enemy of the small traders'.<sup>39</sup> Calcraft was not alone in his support for small scale capitalism and the labourers' right to work. William Morton Pitt established a large manufactory at Kingstone (in the parish of Corfe Castle) for spinning twine, making cordage, dowlas, sacking and sail cloth, 'at a considerable loss and expense to himself'. The manufactory employed upwards of 200 persons not only in Kingstone but in the neighbouring towns and villages where, 'work is afforded to every industriously inclined poor family in the Isle of Purbeck'. According to Hutchins this was 'a noble example, and worthy of imitation, to those who are blessed by Providence with the means of providing for the wants and necessities of their fellow-creatures'.<sup>40</sup> Pitt also owned extensive property in the parish of Tolpuddle where he sponsored an enclosure in 1794 that included a portion of pasture and meadow land reserved for such of the 'industrious cottagers' who wanted to keep cows. The farmers were bound by their leases to take on unlet cow pasture and on application from a cottager the cow pasture had to be let to him. Large gardens were allotted to cottages mostly let for lives at a quit-rent of ten shillings per annum, and a fine of forty five shillings for renewal. As Hutchins noted with approval: 'In a political point of view, such a measure is highly advantageous, as it gives the poor cottager a property, and consequently a stake and interest in the property of the county.' 'Upon the same principle', he continued:

it is in the interests of the proprietors of large manors to discontinue the prevailing and alarming practice of annihilating small leasehold and copyhold estates, by throwing them together into large farms, a system so

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<sup>39</sup> *Hansard*, (New Series) vol. 5 (1821), pp. 1228-230; vol. 11 (1824), pp. 779; 1474.

<sup>40</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, p. 514.



generally prevalent, by which a useful class of yeomanry seems gradually extinguishing.<sup>41</sup>

Hutchins' advocacy on behalf of the 'yeomanry' was a means 'to make the man revere himself as a man'. It also reminds us of the terms of William Stevenson's defence of small farms which defined small-scale farming in opposition to the doctrines of political economy and unrestrained free trade (for which the idea of locality was anathema). Stevenson, like Rudge and Calcraft and Pitt used the alleged moral verities of small scale farming to defend the declining political power of agriculture against the encroachments of the metropolitan and commercial values of the City and industry. To their support for petty producers and opposition to monopoly we may also add that of John Penny a small landowner and proprietor of the Sherborne Journal. His 1832 pamphlet *Practical Retrenchment The Legitimate Object of Political Reform*, was an extended attack on the economic and political power of monopolistic (Tory) landowners.<sup>42</sup> Penny's argument in favour of small scale production was a stick with which to beat the Tories. On the Tory side of argument, however, the political monopoly of agriculture was portrayed in much more flattering terms, and here we turn once more to the editor of the *Dorset County Chronicle* and his remarks on the importance of agriculture to the political stability and economic security of the nation. We recall how he informed his readers in 1827 that:

Any system of political economy, which is solely built on the unstable and uncertain grounds of foreign commerce, which excludes Agriculture, or at least makes her subordinate in the general calculation, virtually destroys the

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 631.

<sup>42</sup> J. Penny, *Practical Retrenchment The Legitimate Object of Political Reform* (Sherborne, 1832).

very principles of national prosperity, and commits the same error as led to the speedy destruction of Tyre, Sidon, Carthage, and other ancient commercial centres, which depended wholly upon the adventitious aid of foreign commerce, to the neglect of agriculture, and are now a heap of ruins.<sup>43</sup>

To avoid the fate of these classical civilisations and repel the political encroachments of trade and manufactures personal judgement must sometimes interrupt natural economic laws. At times of high prices, unemployment or underemployment it was desirable that magistrates should regulate the poor laws to maintain employment and the payment of living wages. In this way it was possible to preserve the local economy and maintain a proper equilibrium in social relations. Powerful traditions could be called upon in support of this regulation. Harry Farr Yeatman supported his intervention in the market for labour by reference to patriarchal ideas of the subsistence of the poor. In a debate on the propriety of subsidising the incomes of the poor from the poor rates he informed a meeting of his brother justices and landowners that, ‘productive labour, however modified and however employed, and carried on to what ever extent, could not be long productive, unless the means of subsistence kept pace with the population thus called into action’.<sup>44</sup> Intervention in the market for labour could take many forms. Yeatman justified his use of the labour rate and the payment of wage subsidies by using an ingenious interpretation of Malthus’ population theory. He argued that it was unrestrained capital accumulation, ‘the gold of these capitalists’ that ‘forced [population] into being’. In these circumstances, he continued, it was the legitimate

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<sup>43</sup> *D.C.C.*, 28 June 1827.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 January 1826



responsibility of magistrates to provide 'the means of maintenance and support (in order) to supply the wants of a starving people'.<sup>45</sup>

Yeatman's opinions and arguments were opposed by his fellow magistrate D. O. P. Okeden. Okeden argued that Dorset's agricultural economy and social equilibrium were threatened not only by the intervention into the market for labour by some magistrates but also from the inactivity of others. Many magistrates, he said, failed to act upon their legitimate role to actively supervise farmers and overseers. They stood by while labourers were paid in part or in whole from the poor rates and were unable to prevent ratepayers and employers from systematically depressing wages. As a result of their unwillingness to discharge their legitimate authority these magistrates were equally guilty of undermining the equilibrium of rural society. Their failure to act encouraged the overweening social and political ambitions of farmers and ratepayers. He argued:

If it be deemed impolitic to settle by law the wages of labour, for fear of injuring the interests of agriculture, and of the labouring class, do not let this power be practically assumed and exerted by the Farmers and Overseers. This power however, they do assume, and do act upon, when they reduce each individual Labourer to the smallest possible weekly payment that can keep a man alive, and then in proportion to his family, provide for his wants from the Poor Book. This usurpation of a power which they who once possessed it are not now permitted to exercise, can, and ought to be, put an end to.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Okeden, *A Letter*, pp. 11-12.

This alternate ideal parish was constructed by Okeden as one element in a wider political and economic whole. In this ideal parish social relations ('rights' and 'duties' in contemporary terms) and labourers' wages were governed by the natural laws of the economy. Okeden wrote:

A labourer shall receive from his employer such wages as shall enable him to lay by a provision for age, sickness, and infirmity (and ) that not receiving such wages, he should when those ills fall upon him, be supported by the persons who employed him in his youth, health and vigour.<sup>47</sup>

The only proper and productive role for magistrates was therefore to supervise the 'rights' and 'duties' of parishioners. This would ensure that the institutions of parish government interfered with and interrupted as little as possible the operation of natural economic laws. Okeden reminded his fellow magistrates that they should, 'Let the Farmer and his labourers make their own free and unfettered bargains. Let us, as Magistrates confine ourselves to the seeing, when we are called upon, that both parties fully and fairly complete their contracts'.<sup>48</sup>

The reference to the labour market and contracts in the context of the poor laws alerts us to some of the material causes for the gentry's reconstruction of the parish as an arena of moral endeavour. As a Select Committee of the House of Lords put it: 'It appears to us that a dependence upon parochial assistance has caused in the poor a diminution of their honest exertions, a relaxation of morals, and a less strict economy than they formerly used.'<sup>49</sup> Similar sentiments could be found in Stevenson's *General View* and the *Dorset County Chronicle* where connections

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *P.P.*, Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Poor Laws (1818, V), p. 109.



were drawn between the labourers' 'willingness' to rely on parochial relief and their 'disposition to idleness' and their consequent 'demoralisation'.<sup>50</sup> The Dorset respondents in the Poor Law Report drew similar connections between poor relief and the diminishing productivity of agricultural labourers. The Reverend Henry Walter of Hazilbury Bryan observed:

(Productivity) is generally agreed to have become much worse. Young married men coming late to their work have been known to answer the farmer's rebuke, that he gets his money's worth out of them, and that anything more which they may receive comes from the parish and not from him'.<sup>51</sup>

Other respondents from Dorset reported that labour productivity was: 'decreasing in consequence of too great a reliance on parochial relief'; considerably deteriorated'; 'diminishing'; very much diminished; for work or not, they claim parochial relief, and feeling this, they are much worse workmen'.<sup>52</sup> Even where one witness assured the Commission that labourers in his parish 'are as industrious as formerly' it was to make the point that this was so only because they had no resort to poor relief, 'for where roadwork had been resorted to...and where wages had been eked out by parish pay, industry has declined'.<sup>53</sup>

An unholy trinity of diminishing industry, lax-morality and insufficient economy recurs again and again in contemporary accounts of the poor laws in Dorset. Many of these accounts presented these moral failings as a decline from a 'golden age'

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<sup>50</sup> W. Stevenson, *General View of the Agricultural Survey of the County of Dorset; with Observations on the Means of its Improvement* (1815), p. 454; *D.C.C.*, 7 July 1826; 21 June 1831.

<sup>51</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries (1834, XXXII), Question 37. Evidence of Henry Walter of Hazilbury Bryan.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Evidence of John Davis of Cerne Abbas; John Venables of Buckland Newton; Matthew Place of Hampreston.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Evidence of David Okeden of More Crichel.



which had existed in a usually unspecified period in the past. The characters of the labourers in the Blandford district was reported to be ‘worse than formerly’, and in the parish of Rampisham labourers did ‘not work as heartily as they used to do’.<sup>54</sup> In Sherborne, J. P. Melmoth presented the decline in industry in generational terms and was inclined ‘to favour the opinion that the older labourers are as industrious as they ever have been; but not so the younger labourers’.<sup>55</sup> A witness from Fontmell Magna was prepared to date the decline in the ‘morals’ of the labouring classes in Dorset to ‘30 years ago since when labour productivity has been diminishing very rapidly’.<sup>56</sup> From Cerne Abbas, the magistrate John Davis had no doubt that: ‘There is a great want of provident and economical management on the part of the poor. If they acted otherwise, in many cases, parochial relief would be unnecessary.’<sup>57</sup>

Connections were also made between the poor laws and the demoralisation of the poor.<sup>58</sup> Because this term was being applied repetitively to the character of the Dorset labourer during this period we might well conclude that this was being diagnosed as a widespread psychological condition of apathy or dispiritment amongst the poor. This would be an anachronistic conclusion and nineteenth century usages of demoralisation meant literally to be without morals. The gentry’s definitions of demoralised referred to the poor’s lack of respect for and adherence to the values and expectations of those in authority over them. In the context of demoralisation the amount of poor rates could therefore be seen as indicator both of the failure of the authority inscribed within the gentry’s identity as patriarchs, and as

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Evidence of Edward Berkeley Portman and John Illot of Bryanstone; Evidence of Arthur Johnstone of Rampisham.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, Evidence of James Melmoth of Sherborne.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Evidence of Robert Salkeld of Fontmell Magna.

<sup>57</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Town Queries (1834, XXXV), Question 29. Evidence of John Davis of Cerne Abbas. Note: John Davis returned replies to both the Rural and Town Queries.

<sup>58</sup> See for example the *D.C.C.*, 21 June 1831.



a barometer of the moral failings of the poor. This was precisely the lesson that James Frampton derived from the expenditure on the poor. The poor rates were, he argued, the financial manifestation of the erosion of the social fabric in Dorset. He associated a host of 'evils' with poor relief: improvident marriages and increased population; reduced wages and diminished industry, disrespect for authority, discontent and incivility.<sup>59</sup> Commenting on the 'moral character of the labouring classes...supported from the parish rates', the Select Committee on Criminal Convictions and Commitments remarked: 'The wretchedness of their condition, the want of regular habits, and the due subordination of the labourer to his employer, all tend greatly to the promotion of crime'.<sup>60</sup>

In the answers to the queries circulated by the Commission of Inquiry in 1832, witness after witness drew invidious contrast between the moral state of the independent labourer and his demoralised brother the parish paid pauper. The same litany was repeated in Dorset. Demoralised labourers were: 'Loose and lazy characters'. They had: 'the most desperate dispositions'. They were 'daring fellows...poaching whilst in receipt of (their) weekly allowance'. They possessed 'a rebellious and unreasonable spirit'.<sup>61</sup> How had it come to pass that ideas of the right to subsistence could be reconstructed to give so unflattering an identity to the poor? The forms of poor relief and wages still accorded, more or less, with patriarchal theories of the household. Inscribed within the terms of reconstructed gentry identities was a different set of moral meanings that had been attached to ideas of

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<sup>59</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries (1834, XXXII and XXXIV), Questions 37 and 53. Evidence of James Frampton of Moreton.

<sup>60</sup> *P.P.* Select Committee on Criminal Convictions and Commitments (1826-27, VI), p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> *P.R.O.*, MH12/2911: Correspondence of the Wimborne Poor Law Union. Letter, Charles Ellis to P.L.C., 24 September 1834; MH/122885: Correspondence of the P.L.C. Letter, Sir Edward Parry to Thomas Frankland Lewis, 3 July 1835; MH12/2764: Correspondence of the Poole Poor law Union. Letter, Thomas Watts to P.L.C., 27 September 1834.

the right to subsistence. These new moralities of natural laws equated subsistence with dependence and thus to immorality. And here we may begin to see other reasons for recreating the ideal parish as an arena of moral endeavour.

Evangelical theology taught the gentry that moral benefits accrued from a free market in labour and was hostile to patriarchal notions of subsistence, particularly when subsistence was the parish allowance calculated by the Scale system. The evangelical magistrate D.O.P. Okeden described his hostility to ideas of subsistence in these terms:

Industry fails, moral character is annihilated, and the poor man of twenty years ago who tried to earn his money and was thankful for it, is now converted into an insolent, discontented, surly, thoughtless pauper, who talks of “right” and “income”, and who will soon fight for these supposed rights and income, unless some step be taken to arrest his progress to open violence. Some rude efforts he at first may make to shake off his state of servitude, but he finally yields to the temptations of the pay-table and the scale, feels his bondage, puts off his generous feelings of industry and gratitude and independence.<sup>62</sup>

Okeden’s tirade against the bondage of ‘pay-table’ subsistence signals the common terms and the fundamental difference between the two alternate parish identities constructed by the gentry. His definition of the ideal parish portrayed the hand of God as the creator of natural providential economic laws. It followed from this that any interference in the natural formation of ‘free and unfettered bargains’ was a failure to live according to God’s providence. This failure created poverty and

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<sup>62</sup> *Third Report*, p. 314.



misery and undermined the social equilibrium of rural social life and threatened the property and traditional political ascendancy of the gentry. In contrast to this analysis, Yeatman's definition of an ideal parish was built on a belief that inequalities, poverty and misery were a consequence of a distorted economic system. This distortion was a monopolistic system of contract which denied the labourer with only his labour to sell the full value of that labour. Human misery was therefore the consequence of human activity, not part of God's plan for His Creation. Both Okeden and Yeatman defined the parish as a place of work. And both definitions depended on a conception of a relation between the capacities of a people to labour and the wealth this relationship created. But, and it was a very large but, the relationship between work and wages was defined in substantially different terms. As Pitt's attempts to create work and Calcraft's defence of petty production suggest, some of the gentry did not imagine a market price for labour and defined the natural wage as the cost of workers' subsistence.<sup>63</sup> Here we see the continuing influence of the terms of oeconomy. It did not matter much what form these wages took, whether in kind, in cash from the employer or as a subsidy from the poor rates. The logic of oeconomy demanded only that the wage should be sufficient to provide subsistence. Indeed, Hobsbawm has evidence to show that employers in the nineteenth century acquired their skilled labour at less than market price because the workers' wage calculation was for a long time determined by a customary pre-industrial wage hierarchy.<sup>64</sup> The ideal parish of work defined by the terms of political economy fractured this logic by insisting that there was a market price for labour that could not be gainsaid by poor law allowances. The logic of

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<sup>63</sup> Chapter eight.

<sup>64</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men* (1964), p. 409.

market theories attacked the right of subsistence and, in the words of Malthus, challenged the idea that ‘the market price of labour ought always to be sufficient decently to support a family...a conclusion which contradicts the plainest and most obvious principles of supply and demand’.<sup>65</sup> The logic of this position was an unfettered market for labour which regulated and improved productivity to the benefit of the employer and his workers. Stevenson had earlier noted how a market wage gave the farmer ‘an interest in observing the workmen, and checking in some measure their habitual propensity to idleness’.<sup>66</sup> He also noted in his description of the cereal producing areas of Dorset, that this market was very far from being free. He described how labourers were tied to their employment by an ingenious variety of extra-market devices, particularly the provision of rent free cottage accommodation. He associated these practices with ‘the magistrates of the county (who) have agreed, that a man is under an obligation to work for the farmer, in whose cottage he resides; apparently under the [mistaken] idea that he is receiving a part of his wages every day in house-rent’.<sup>67</sup> He continued:

Under these circumstances, the liberty which is left to the labourer is very small indeed. To be deprived of the power of choosing their own masters, is an unpleasant idea, and forcibly brings to mind the ancient feudal tenures of England, and the modern ones of other countries, where ignorance, vice and poverty, go hand in hand.<sup>68</sup>

Stevenson’s ‘circumstances’ show how labour discipline and productivity could be represented by the gentry not as the selfish pursuit of profits but as a more general

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<sup>65</sup> T.R. Malthus, ‘Essays’ in *The Works of Thomas Robert Malthus*, (eds) E.A. Wrigley and D Souden (1986) vol. 3, p. 373.

<sup>66</sup> Stevenson, *General View*, p. 454.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*



concern with freedom and choice. By identifying the market in labour as an essential feature in humanity's march to liberty from the shackles of feudalism, Stevenson echoed Adam Smith's naturalistic doctrine which treated the dispossession of the poor as a fact of nature.<sup>69</sup> The ideas of the parish as an arena of moral endeavour may therefore be viewed also as a means to construct arguments and policies on pertinent aspects of rural employment and poor relief in the terms other than those defined by the intermixing of the poor rates with the market prices for labour. This naturalisation of wage labour provided the space for the construction of labour as a commodity which should have the freedom to reap proportional rewards. More than this, it enabled some of the gentry to associate hard work and morality. A busy labour force was a moral one but how to keep the poor busy knowing the Devil finds mischief for idle hands?

One tried and tested solution was to bind the poor to the soil and to continuous labour by means of low wages and a variety of perks such as potato grounds, pasture, gardens and allotments. This was an investment in the burdens of the poor as free labourers which returned both monetary and moral rewards to the farmer and labourer alike. They were bound to one another by mutual ties of work and rewards. In 1824 the Select Committee on labourers' wages argued in favour of free labour in the following terms:

There are but two motives by which men are induced to work: the one, the hope of improving the condition of themselves and their families; the other, the fear of punishment. The one the principle of free labour, the other the principle of slave labour. The one produces industry, frugality, sobriety,

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<sup>69</sup> Chapter four.

family affection, and puts the labouring class in a friendly relation with the rest of the community; the other causes, as certainly, idleness, improvidence, vice, dissension, and places the master and the labourer in a perpetual state of jealousy and mistrust.<sup>70</sup>

There were also more prosaic ways to regulate the conduct of the poor and here we find a solution in the terms of an efficient parish administration. As the Dorset magistrate the Reverend Samuel Best put it:

In the largest parishes with the aid of a visiting society properly organised, a complete but not officious surveillance may be effected and by sections judiciously arranged, the most perfect order may be established, while the ministrations of the clergy, called in only when circumstances may require it, may be rendered far more efficient than it were otherwise possible in a large parish.<sup>71</sup>

This solution was practicable in a small parish with a resident clergyman, but as D.O.P. Okeden knew, and as the parliamentary returns show, Dorset parishes were not often noted for their resident clergy.<sup>72</sup> They were, however, noted for the vigour of their resident gentry, who had their own 'efficient' suggestions to arrange the poor into 'the most perfect order'.

It is also possible to reveal the gentry's competing prescriptions for parish government and belonging in the answers to the rural queries devised by the Poor Law Commissioners. From these answers it is possible to deduce the economic component of belonging in the intellectual thought of Dorset's magistrates and their

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<sup>70</sup> *P.P.*, S.C. on Labourers' Wages (1824, IV), p. 404.

<sup>71</sup> S. Best, *Parochial Ministrations* (1839), p. 95.

<sup>72</sup> *Third Report*, p. 312; and see Appendix D.



allies in the 1830s. Fifty-three questions were circulated to rural parishes during 1832 in three separate questionnaires and the answers of the responding parishes subsequently combined and published in tabular form in the Report of 1834. Replies were returned for approximately ten per cent of the 15,000 parishes in England and Wales. These contained about twenty percent of the population; but the proportion of rural parishes reporting from each county varied from a high of 27 per cent in Sussex to a low of just 1 per cent in Middlesex.<sup>73</sup>

Thirteen of Dorset's parishes made separate replies to the rural queries. A further twenty-six parishes of the Blandford North petty session division were included in a return made by E. B. Portman and John Ilott. Therefore 39 of Dorset's 283 parishes replied to the rural queries. These parishes accounted for 14 per cent of the county's total population. Every division in Dorset except Bridport returned at least one set of replies to the rural queries.<sup>74</sup> Four of the returns were completed by churchwardens or overseers. Of the remaining twelve returns, eight were completed by active magistrates familiar with their respective divisions. The return for the Blandford North division was completed by a magistrate and one of his tenant farmers. Three returns were completed by clergymen, one of whom, Henry Walter was an active and vociferous opponent of what he saw as poor law abuses in his division. The remaining return was made by a prominent banker.<sup>75</sup> As we will see, where the respondents commented on the ideal organisation of the parish and/or the role of magistrates, there is a remarkable degree of congruence in their replies and suggestions.

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<sup>73</sup> K. Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty* (1981), pp. 44-51.

<sup>74</sup> Appendix C: Table C2.2

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, Table C3.3.1.

Locality was anathema to the logic of political economy. We may see how this logic assisted different members of the Dorset landed interest to redefine their ideas of what it meant to belong to a parish. Question 51 asked: 'Can you suggest any and what alteration in the Settlement laws for the purpose either of extending the market for labour, or interfering less with contracts, and diminishing fraud and litigation?' Eight parishes and the division of Blandford North made replies to this question. Some of these respondents were caught on the horns of a logical dilemma. They had absolute belief in the desirability of the free operation of natural economic laws and an absolute determination to manage unhindered and unfettered their own particular circumstances. James Frampton of Moreton, for example, argued for the total abolition of settlement and for people to be relieved in the place they lived at the time they required relief. Frampton was secure in the knowledge that in promoting labour mobility the close parish of Moreton was unlikely to be burdened by much in the way of casual relief payments. However, he also recognised a downside to labour mobility that might affect him and others in the longer term. He knew that the economy of Moreton depended on tying a permanent pool of labour to the parish. One method of achieving this would be for landowners to build cottage accommodation to properly house the resident labouring population. However, if the labouring poor were encouraged to be mobile by abolishing settlement, there would be no incentive for landowners to build cottages. Frampton informed the Commissioners that cottage building was determined by two factors. The landowner's ability to finance the construction of cottages and the knowledge that the combination of cottage and settlement was sufficient to tie the labourer to the parish. If the Settlement Laws were abolished what incentive would there be to



build cottages?<sup>76</sup> The answers to the question need to be treated with caution. Frampton's reply suggests we cannot simply infer a positive relationship between calling for the abolition of settlement and a non-interventionist mentality. Cottage building was seen as a legitimate device to interfere with labour mobility. With this caveat in mind, the replies may be divided into different categories: total abolition; marriage; place of birth; residence; and work.<sup>77</sup>

The most common reform advocated by respondents was to restrict settlement to birth. Indeed, John Ilott who advocated this reform explicitly rejected the idea that work should ever gain a settlement. Many of the respondents who wholeheartedly supported reform to free the market for labour rejected the idea of making the impersonal contractual relations inherent in work the condition for settlement. They emphasised instead that a settlement was acquired where a person was born. There is a possible economic explanation for their preference. They wanted all the benefits of a mobile work-force but none of the financial responsibilities. Settlement by birth may have had an economic attraction: it was much easier to police and therefore much less subject to fraud and the attendant expense. As Dorset magistrate the Reverend Thomas Dade put it:

Settlement should be where the person is born: it would extend the market for labour, as not interfering with contracts; it would diminish fraud, and tend to prevent litigation, except where a settlement is gained by hiring of land and houses.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries (1834, XXXIV), Question 51. Evidence of James Frampton of Moreton.

<sup>77</sup> Appendix C: Table C.4.

<sup>78</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries, Question 51. Evidence of Thomas Dade of Broadway.



Dade's idea of the parish as the locus of natural economic laws brings us back again to the ideas of providential Christian theology. During the early nineteenth century the parish came to be associated with and to symbolise Christian ideals. This association has been explored and analysed in the respective works of Waterman, Bradley and Boyd Hilton on evangelicalism and political economy. They have each suggested that the growing influence of Evangelical theology was important in defining economic relations as moral ones.<sup>79</sup> The parish as an arena for the operation of natural economic laws came to be symbolised as a moral economic ideal. In the same way that economics and morality were said to be interrelated and interdependent so the ideal parish was understood by many contemporaries to depend upon Christian religious principles and Christian political ones. William Palmer, Arch Deacon of Dorset and an active magistrate, published in 1832 his research into some of those ideals entitled *Origines Liturgicae; or Antiquities of the English Ritual and a Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies*. Palmer's work employed the idea of historic continuity to rediscover historical Christianity and its role in the spiritual and ritual life of the parish.<sup>80</sup> The rediscovery of historical Christianity and the intrusion of Christianised political and economic thought would influence the construction of an ideal parish organisation. In one well known construction the social reformer the reverend Henry Mackenzie argued:

The true idea, that is, the Christian idea, of the Parish is this: That it is a body corporate; derived through, and in its locality representing, the church

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<sup>79</sup> A.M.C. Waterman, 'The Ideological Alliance of Political Economy and Christian Theology, 1798-1833', *J.Ecc.H.*, 34 (1983), pp. 231-44; Ian Bradley, 'The Politics of Godliness; Evangelicals in Parliament, 1784-1882' (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1974), p. 22.; A.J.B. Hilton, *The Age Of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford, 1988).

<sup>80</sup> A. Symonson, 'Theology, Worship and the Late Victorian Church', in C. Brooks and A. Saint, (eds), *The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society* (Manchester, 1995), p. 195.



of Christ. Each individual member has therein his own rights and his own duties. No one therein is absolutely and entirely independent, but each is bound by the law of goodwill and fellowship to subordinate his own desires to the general will as expressed through the organ of the parish vestry.<sup>81</sup>

Mackenzie was one amongst many lay and religious writers who constructed the ideal organisation of parish society in Christian moral terms. William Paley, Edmund Burke, William Cobbett, Robert Southey, Kenelm Digby, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and many others could be quoted to similar effect even where they did not always express their yearnings for a vanished social order in such explicitly Christian terms. Mackenzie's suggestions for a reformed parochial system of government also addressed the practicalities of parish government. In particular he explored the relationship between political action and 'local energy', and a revitalised Vestry and the 'general will'. Addressing Lord Ingestre, he argued:

Were the true idea of the parish realised by the different classes of society, every vestry would be the centre of action for the removing of the crying evils that exist in our densely-crowded metropolis. It is only because the parochial system is not in full working efficiency, that we are obliged to fall back upon voluntary associations and central committees to do that which ought to be done, and might be done, by local energy in our several parishes.<sup>82</sup>

Mackenzie's prescription for a revitalised parish was rooted in a shrewd understanding of the motivating power of local interests against distant central

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<sup>81</sup> Rev. Henry Mackenzie, 'Ideas of the Parish', in Viscount Ingestre, (ed.), *Meliora: Or Better Times To Come* (1853), p. 36.

<sup>82</sup> Mackenzie, 'Ideas of the Parish', *Meliora*, p. 39.

control. He also understood that local interests could only be fully effective when they were represented by efficient local government. With the benefit of hindsight we may see more clearly than he did the logical fractures in his advocacy of fellowship, goodwill and vitality in a society characterised by antagonistic economic relations. Mackenzie, however, perceived no intrinsic contradictions between competition and efficiency on the one hand and Christian fellowship on the other. Like many of his contemporaries he believed that social conflict was the consequence of the misunderstandings that naturally arose in societies that lacked a commonly agreed vocabulary of social action. He wrote that:

No one who has any acquaintance with literature or with argument can doubt the necessity of arriving at a common consent as to the definition of words, if a common agreement upon the words themselves is to be expected. The absence of this common acceptation of terms is a like fruitful cause of dissension in public argument, and in social or private disputation.<sup>83</sup>

Mackenzie's solution to dissension was to promote the vocabulary and propositions of Christian theology as the means to arrive at a 'common acceptation of terms'. In this way it would be possible to secure the implementation of the 'general will' in the terms of commonly held theological premises. In Christian religious terms, to belong to a parish laid a bond of brotherhood upon everybody who lived within its boundaries. The parish was conceived as an arena in which each man possessed his individual commonwealth of rights and duties: a perfect miniature of Divine providence and a microcosm of the wider civil society. When the clergy and laity

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.



spoke of commonwealths they meant the particular spheres in which each man lived in security sufficient to bridge the divides of prestige, wealth and power. The bond of brotherhood was therefore no levelling device and it did not imply that all men were equal. Commonwealths were the means to sustain the social and moral foundations of the parish and the hierarchy they supported on which the security of civil society was built.

Some of the Dorset gentry sought to release the vital reforming energy of Mackenzie's 'general will'. This was done by suggesting and implementing practical reforms of parish institutions in order to strengthen the ideas of belonging. Prominent in this process was Edward Berkeley Portman who proposed to empower a simple majority of ratepayers by a voluntary transfer of magisterial authority to the parish vestries. In proposing to empower the vestry Portman defined his ideal parish as an arena in which a free market for labour existed and any customs, practices or legislation which operated to interfere with this natural order of things, should be done away with. For example, road surveyors were appointed by magistrates. These appointments sometimes included unqualified men who nonetheless could be relied upon to provide employment on the roads for unemployed or underemployed labourers. Here, according to Portman, was both a hidden subsidy to labour and a burden to the ratepayers. The only return from this interference in the market for labour was the creation of an 'immoral' and work-shy class of labourers bound to their parishes by this artificial market for labour.<sup>84</sup> His concerns for the free operation of natural economic laws may be seen most clearly in his proposition that, 'to attempt to establish a maximum or minimum of wages was mischievous in the

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<sup>84</sup> *Hansard* (Third Series), vol. 15 (1833), p. 1145.

extreme; for labour was a commodity, and every interference with the laws of trade for such a purpose must be injurious'.<sup>85</sup> To prevent this injury he proposed to parliament the idea to remove the power of approving surveyors from magistrates and vest it exclusively in the vestry.<sup>86</sup> He further rehearsed his ideas for reforming parish government in 1833 but this time proposed to abolish all laws of settlement which 'erected a wall round every parish and converted it into a prison'.<sup>87</sup> Portman was not advocating that magistrates should retreat entirely from parish government. He rather wanted magistrates to be a court of appeal and the vestry to act by reference to natural economic laws, in the best interests of every member of the parish. As he put it, 'if magistrates were to have any authority at all, they should have sufficient authority to preserve order, as they were bound to do by the tenor of their oaths'.<sup>88</sup> In 1829, for example, he recommended to parliament that magistrates should not have the power to disallow the rules of Friendly Societies, he wanted the members to be in sole charge.<sup>89</sup> He also recommended that the majority of the ratepayers should decide whether or not to block up highways subject to an appeal at Quarter Sessions.<sup>90</sup>

The process by which the gentry redefined and limited their governing purpose to the supervision of natural laws was influenced and experienced through the filter of their particular vision of the parish as an earthly arena of moral endeavour. This vision projected a set of ideals, in institutions and behaviour. It prescribed the sorts of behaviour expected of the working classes and their employers and it also defined

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, (Second Series), vol. 23 (1830), p. 39.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, (Third Series), vol. 15 (1833), p. 1145.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, (Second Series) vol. 23 (1830), p. 40.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 24 (1830), p. 406.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 29 (1829), p. 1391.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, (Third Series), vol. 5 (1831), p. 1035.



the limits to gentry authority. The gentry's notions of the parish as an arena of moral endeavour were (to them) a positive means to manage and control the modernisation of Dorset's rural society. These notions enabled them to void the theoretical conceptions of oeconomy by defining as natural the economic rationalities of political economy. The gentry's construction of ideas of belonging in the terms of the laws of nature laid down by God signalled a shift in focus from the terms and theories of oeconomy to those of economy; from management of the household's wealth to management of Dorset's and thus the nation's wealth. What the gentry did and were prepared to do in the terms of this idea of the parish signalled their more or less reluctant retreat from the direct management and control of the parish. If the voluntary surrender of their authority could not stop change then it could and did underpin an idea of belonging which they hoped would exclude inappropriate interpretations of the processes of change. Gradually a distinction was drawn between poverty and indigence which inevitably, perhaps, led the gentry to reconsider their attitudes towards the poor laws and what I have termed in the next chapter the discourse of the burdens of the poor.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *The Gentry, the Poor Laws and the Burdens of the Poor*

This chapter offers an analysis of the origins of the so-called Speenhamland system of poor law allowances in Dorset that is markedly different from the existing historiography. It argues that existing interpretations of poor relief in Dorset are anti-historical because they project twentieth century definitions of economic rationality backwards into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These interpretations ignore or disguise the ways in which contemporary economic rationality was discursively constructed within the competing languages of patriarchal oeconomy and the newer languages of market theories. The historiography substitutes instead a ‘spuriously natural rationality’ and ignores or neglects the complexities of these languages.<sup>1</sup> I will argue that the decision to institute a system of poor allowances in 1792 was consistent with a discourse of the patriarchal household which told the story of the poor in terms of the family and the obligations of the gentry as the source of work and wealth. I have termed this the discourse of the burdens of the poor.

Traditional historiography has offered two interpretations of the integration of the poor laws within the market for labour in the countryside. One interpretation is couched in the terms of marginalist theories of economic development and explains allowances as a more or less rational response to managing the problems of

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<sup>1</sup> K. Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty* (1981), pp. 24-31.



transition in underdeveloped agricultural economies.<sup>2</sup> The other interpretation emphasises the economic and cultural authority of the gentry and explains the institution of allowances in the terms of an amorphous paternalist ethos which sustains the moral economy of the poor.<sup>3</sup> The late George Body's doctoral dissertation on the Dorset poor laws is constructed within the terms of both these interpretations but, as we will see later, it is overwhelmingly concerned with "natural" economic explanations of human behaviour.<sup>4</sup> His thesis was completed more than thirty years ago and is the only major scholarly study of the old poor laws in Dorset. It is a pioneering and much neglected examination of the administration of poor relief in the period from 1760-1834.<sup>5</sup>

Body's theories of economic development are not the natural theoretical explanations of Adam Smith or Thomas Malthus, however, but those of twentieth century development economics. These theories allow poverty to be the privileged object of his investigation and define the poor laws as a redistributive agency automatically responsive to something labelled distress.<sup>6</sup> This interpretation

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<sup>2</sup> This approach is exemplified in the work of M. Blaug, 'The Myth of the Old Poor Law and The making of the New', *J.Ec.H.*, 23 (1963); and 'The Poor Law Report Re-examined', *J.Ec.H.*, 24 (1964).

<sup>3</sup> Two of the best known proponents of this approach are Anthony Brundage and Peter Dunkley. See, for example, A. Brundage, 'The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law: a reappraisal of the revolution in government', *E.Hl.R.*, 87 (1972); 'The landed interest and the New Poor Law: a reply', *E.Hl.R.*, 90 (1975), and, *The Making of the New Poor Law: The politics of inquiry, enactment and implementation, 1832-39* (1978). P. Dunkley, 'The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law: A Critical Note', *E.Hl.R.*, 88 (1973), 'Paternalism, the Magistracy and Poor Relief in England, 1795-1834', *I.R.Soc.H.*, 24 (1979), 'Whigs and Paupers. The Reform of the English Poor Laws 1830-34', *J.B.S.*, 20 (1981), *The Crisis of the Old Poor Law in England, 1795-1834. An Interpretative Essay* (New York, 1982) and W. Apfel and P. Dunkley, 'English Rural Society and the New Poor Law: Bedfordshire 1834-47', *Soc.H.*, 10 (1985).

<sup>4</sup> G.A. Body, 'The Administration of the Old Poor Laws in Dorset, 1760-1834: with special reference to agrarian distress' (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 1963), pp. 318-20.

<sup>5</sup> Other works which touch on the old poor laws in Dorset are: K.P. Bawn, 'Social Protest, Popular Disturbances, and Public Order in Dorset, 1790-1837' (PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1984). M.J. Flame, 'The Administration of the Old Poor Laws In Poole, c.1760-c.1834' (B.A. thesis, University of Bournemouth, 1985). M.J. Flame, 'The Politics of Poor Law Administration in the Borough of Poole 1835-c.1845' *PDNHAS*, 108 (1986).

<sup>6</sup> Body, 'The Old Poor Laws', pp. 61-72.



effectively obscures the influences of human agency in defining and redefining relief strategies. The poor, the farmers, and the gentry are portrayed as ciphers and they interact in a world where cultural divisions and competing intellectual traditions are rarely acknowledged to exist and seldom influential in administering poor relief.<sup>7</sup> He does occasionally present allowances as an instrument of paternalism used by the authorities to buy social peace during periods of economic dislocation.<sup>8</sup> But by and large he describes and emphasises the helplessness of the poor law authorities in the face of inexorable and (to them) barely comprehensible economic forces. Although in defence of the authorities in Dorset he excused their 'failure...to produce any constructive measures to ease the situation [as] due...to a lack of understanding rather than to ill will'.<sup>9</sup> This is an unsurprising conclusion because it was entailed in his theories of economic development and an original premise that the poor laws were in some way a redistributive agency. His models of capitalist development and theories of development economics had their genesis in the practical experiences and intellectual climate of the late twentieth century. When these premises were applied to late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Dorset, it was unsurprising that he should have conceptualised poor relief as a simple function of economic development, and with a predictable conclusion. In his words:

the poor laws could be administered more efficiently in the most developed areas, [which demonstrated] that the rate of poor relief bears a closer relationship to the physical nature and economic state of the area concerned

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327, and see also Bawn, 'Social Protest', pp. 11, 19-21.

<sup>8</sup> Body, 'The Old Poor Laws', p. 320.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.



than to the poor-law methods employed...greater prosperity...made possible different poor-law methods.<sup>10</sup>

His conclusion is a consequence of the application of a marginalist theory of economic development. This theory determined the existence of discrete geographical and economic regions in Dorset which were modernising at separate rates and experiencing different levels of prosperity. This idea of differential modernisation permitted the corollary of differences in poor law administration. It enabled Body to advance the argument that differences between their methods of poor relief and amounts of their poor rates were causally related to their particular stage of economic development. His conclusion also represents a methodological sleight of hand. Body established/proved the existence of these discrete economic regions only by demonstrating that each was characterised by a particular mode of poor relief and each supported a variable but distinct burden of poor rates.<sup>11</sup> Having established a causal relationship between poor relief, poverty and economic development Body was able to discount and ignore contemporary ideas of moral reformation as organising principles of poor relief.

Body found that there was not a Speenhamland system in the sense of a universally applied bread scale used in the assistance of the able-bodied. But he is unable to say exactly what the institution was doing in Dorset. All he says is that there were numerous ephemeral and short-lived schemes to assist the able-bodied after 1792.<sup>12</sup> For example, that relief to the poor was calculated from a variety of local variants: the 'Dorchester Method', 'The Cerne Scale', 'The Sturminster Scale' and so on.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter Twenty, *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 227-246.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-223.

He made much of the local autonomy of parishes, both in relation to the directives of the Dorset Quarter Sessions and of parliamentary legislation, and employed the term experimental to the frequent changes in parochial management of the poor.<sup>14</sup> But nowhere does he tell us what the poor laws were actually doing in Dorset beyond describing how the poor were assisted at different times and in separate places. By raiding individual sources to support *a priori* assumptions about poor relief, he was never in a position to say anything meaningful about poor relief strategies in this period. By concentrating on how relief was delivered and what was offered he necessarily identified it as a diversity of pragmatic responses to fluctuations in the agricultural economies of Dorset. The evidence he adduces for frequent changes in the management of the poor conceal the ubiquity of allowances; whether as direct wage subsidies or as the more indirect forms of family allowances. It also conceals the fact that his amorphous category the poor was for the most part comprised of married men, their wives and children. These confusions and elisions stem from his failure to adequately define the configuration of the poor laws in Dorset. In contrast, I use the data collected at the behest of central government to argue that the poor laws in Dorset were characterised by underlying continuities in the relief of the family unit. These data allow us to say much more meaningful things about poor relief in the county. They allow us to suggest a plausible hypothesis of why the poor laws were configured to favour the relief of the family and why the gentry gradually attempted to deny relief to married men in the employ of individuals. We may see family allowances as the last great public affirmation by the gentry of oeconomy's concerns with the subsistence of the poor. The gentry's gradual attempts to restrict

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.



poor relief represents the triumph over oeconomy of that part of their self-identities derived from the market theories of political economy.

The following narrative of the configuration of the poor laws in Dorset is based on data derived from three separate sources: the *Abstract of Answers and Returns...Relative to the Expenses and Maintenance of the Poor* for 1802-03; the *Abstract of Returns on Labourers' Wages* for 1824 and the Royal Commission *Answers to Rural and Town Queries* for 1832.<sup>15</sup>

The *Abstract of Returns* for 1802-03 asked eight questions about expenditure and eight about numbers on relief through the year Easter 1802 to Easter 1803. The replies are especially valuable because they enable us to define the relative importance of the group of married men with children who were relieved in Dorset. The other positive advantage of the *Abstract* is that there was a very high response rate to its questions: only one parish in Dorset failed to return answers. Nevertheless there is a major difficulty with the returns. We have no way of knowing whether parishes returned the numbers of people relieved or the numbers of times that successful applications were made for relief. Clearly if it was the latter kind of total there will be an element of double counting. However, in his tabulation of the national figures Williams noted that where double counting did take place it was principally amongst the group of people returned as occasionally relieved and it is only here that that the discrepancy between the different kinds of totals would be very large.<sup>16</sup> The group of those in Dorset occasionally relieved only accounted for one-third of all people relieved. It is also significant that the percentage of

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<sup>15</sup> *P.P.*, *Abstract of Answers and Returns...Relative to the Expenses and Maintenance of the Poor* for 1802-03 (1803-04, XIII); *P.P.*, *Abstract of Returns on Labourers' Wages* (1825, XIX); *P.L.R.*, *Answers to Rural and Town Queries* (1834, XXX-XXXVI).

<sup>16</sup> Williams, *Pauperism*, p. 38.

occasionally relieved is remarkably constant if the replies are considered on a division by division basis.<sup>17</sup> This consistency suggests that those who filled in the returns understood the question in at least one of its senses.

The poor law in Dorset in 1802-03 was not paying allowances universally to all the individuals who were aged or had young dependants. This is clear from a comparison of the total number on relief and the age structure of population data which first became available twenty years later in 1821. In 1802-03, the 15,094 persons relieved made up 13.08 per cent of population in Dorset.<sup>18</sup> In 1821 men and women aged sixty years and over made up 7.5 per cent of population and adult men in the age group twenty to fifty years made up 17.4 per cent of population. If the age structure of 1802-03 was anything like this then the poor law must have been selectively assisting some of the old and some of the men with dependant children. Furthermore, the poor law was not operating in Dorset to permanently relieve a fortunate few who were assisted. The most common form of relief in Dorset was discontinuous relief, and in 1802-03, 4,385 paupers, or almost 30 per cent of the total number in the county, were returned as occasionally relieved.<sup>19</sup>

Those who received relief typically received outdoor relief and continued to live in their own homes. Out of the 15,094 persons relieved in the county, only 851 were returned as in workhouses or houses of industry, that is a little more than 5.5 per cent of the total relieved in 1802-03.<sup>20</sup> The vast majority of people in receipt of relief in Dorset during the year received only small doles. However, able-bodied adults and children constituted almost 84 per cent of the total number of those

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<sup>17</sup> Appendix C: Table C1.1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, See totals in col. iii of Tables C1.2 to C1.10 inclusive and C1.1.



relieved and it is probable that a large proportion of these were able-bodied men and their dependants.<sup>21</sup> If these families are taken as typically consisting of a man, a woman, and three children, then the average weekly dole figure would have to be multiplied by five to approximate its contribution to the family budget. The result would mean relief was roughly three-quarters of the income of a lowly-paid labourer.

This discussion now turns to the question of who was assisted in the 1800's. Relief was given not only to the chronically sick and elderly but also to very large numbers of able bodied men and their families. However, a relatively small proportion of those on relief was returned as aged or sick; only 15.56 per cent of the total number of paupers was returned as 'persons above sixty years of age, or disabled from labour by permanent illness or other infirmity'. But this 15 per cent amounted to 2,321 persons so the line with regard to who was assisted had not been set against this class of person.<sup>22</sup> The over sixty age group accounted for a little over 7 per cent of the total population in 1821 so that these 2,321 persons represents about one third of the total aged population. The proportion of old and sick may have been relatively low because the line of division had been set to include very large numbers of young, healthy, employable adults and their dependant children. This may represent the gentry's adherence with patriarchal oeconomy's concern to maintain the subsistence and thus the economic value of the poor. As we will see below, it may also represent farmers' preferences to employ the family as the unit of labour. So that some of the sick and elderly who might otherwise have been relieved permanently received only occasional doles because the numbers of able-

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Table C1.1, col. viii.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, col. vii.

bodied people relieved and their dependants was so high. A total of 12,553 of such men, women and children were relieved and they accounted for almost 84 per cent of all those relieved.<sup>23</sup>

If, as I have suggested, poor relief in Dorset in 1802-03 was selective in favour of supporting the family unit, then this was so because the poor law authorities established a firm line of division between married men and others. But first we need to challenge a well entrenched argument derived from a particular interpretation of the 1802-03 returns on poor relief. In the one modern account of the *Abstract* for 1802-03, Marshall has argued that relief to the able-bodied male was relatively unimportant and demonstrated (to his own satisfaction) that able-bodied males in receipt of relief accounted for considerably less than 20 per cent of the pauper host and not much more than two per cent of the entire population of England and Wales.<sup>24</sup> As for the 2 per cent of total population figure, this can only be taken seriously if we ignore the historical and demographic contexts. First, his argument that able bodied males accounted for considerably less than 20 per cent of the pauper host is illogical. Where adult males received relief on account of the size of their families and when for example, the typical family in receipt of relief consisted of a man, wife and three dependant children, then it would be absolutely impossible for the percentage of labouring men in receipt of relief to rise above twenty percent. His supposed demonstration of the unimportance of able-bodied pauperism rests on the separation of labouring men from their dependants. The criticism that came to be overwhelmingly levelled against the old poor laws was its assistance to able-bodied men.<sup>25</sup> When contemporaries railed against this category

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, cols viii and ix.

<sup>24</sup> J.D. Marshall, *The Old Poor Law 1795-1834* (1968), pp. 30-6.

<sup>25</sup> Chapter five.



of poor receiving relief they measured its deleterious effects against the population in the able-bodied male age group. We know from the 1821 census that this group made up 17 per cent of the total population.<sup>26</sup> If that age structure was similar in 1802-03 then this is the proper comparator to use. In that case, there would have been 19,604 able-bodied males in the county and 10.39 per cent would have been receiving relief.

In a much cited article Mark Blaug argued that by 1834 relief to the able-bodied male labourer had been reduced to a rump of counties paying child allowances.<sup>27</sup> Williams' work on the old poor laws has questioned this conclusion and shown that all the counties paying child allowances in 1802-03 were still relieving married men in 1834.<sup>28</sup> Blaug, as we recall, was interested in denying that there was any basis to the arguments which poor law reformers deployed against the old poor laws. He was therefore interested in demonstrating discontinuity in poor law practices to show that the solutions to pauperism embodied in the Poor Law Amendment Act were nugatory. This interest may explain why his discussion focused on the period between 1824 and 1832 and the earlier period from 1802-03 was not considered. Evidence of continuity is important because it is also unwitting evidence that the relief of married men with children represented a more or less continuous coherent and logical application of the rationale of the burdens of the poor.

The evidence from Dorset suggests a great measure of continuity in poor law practice between 1800 and 1832. The Select Committee *Abstract of Returns* of 1824 and the replies to the Rural and Town Queries of 1832 asked questions about whether parish authorities gave various kinds of relief to able-bodied men. The

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<sup>26</sup> Williams, *Pauperism*, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> M. Blaug, 'The Poor Law Report Re-examined', *J.Ec.H.*, 24 (1964), pp. 229-45.

<sup>28</sup> Williams, *Pauperism*, p. 51.



replies to these questions demonstrate the persistence of relief to married men with dependants in Dorset right up to 1832. It is appropriate here, however, to concede that the two returns did not include replies from all the parishes in Dorset. The 1824 returns included answers from the Blandford North and Dorchester petty sessions divisions and the parish of Dorchester. Replies were also received from places described as Shaftesbury and Wareham which refer respectively to the general relief practices in the Shaftesbury East and the Blandford South petty session division. The replies covered the relief practices in 119 of Dorset's 283 parishes.<sup>29</sup> Sixteen separate parishes and the Blandford District made returns to the 1832 Rural Queries. The sixteen parishes were drawn from eight of the nine petty session divisions. The Blandford District contained 30 parishes of which four made separate returns in 1832.<sup>30</sup> Therefore the replies to the rural queries covered relief practices in 38 parishes in Dorset.

The 1824 *Abstract* asked respondents nine questions. The questions sought information on types of relief practices and classes of paupers. These questions did not always clearly define the practice they were seeking information on or the classes of pauper for which they sought information. The ordering of these questions, however, and their internal logic allow us to associate the individual questions with particular classes of person and relief practices. Question one asked whether any labourers employed by farmers received the whole or the part of their wages for that labour out of the poor rates. Clearly labourer here meant agricultural labourer and the question also sought evidence of allowance schemes. However, the

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<sup>29</sup> Appendix C: Table C2.1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Table C2.2. Petty session boundaries were redrawn in 1829. The number of parishes in a particular division in 1832 were greater or smaller than in 1829. For example, the Blandford North division contained 29 parishes when the returns were tabulated in the Select Committee Report of 1824 but only 26 parishes after the 1829 reform.



question does not specify whether labourer meant single man or married man with children or both. Question two, however, allows us to clear up this confusion. The second question actually asked whether married labourers with children received assistance from the poor rate. Question one, therefore, must refer to unmarried men or married men without children. Employed men have their wages subsidised, married men by reference to the size of their families. But what does wages of their labour mean? Unemployed men do not get their wages subsidised when they are sent on roundsman schemes. The disparities between the lowest daily rate of pay returned in answer to question six and the answers returned to question nine about average weekly wages, suggest the ubiquitous nature of allowances in Dorset in 1824.<sup>31</sup>

The questions of 1824 and 1832 inquired about the existence and extent of three distinct modes of relieving the able-bodied male labourer: first, child allowances given to the low paid; second, wages paid out of the rates to the underemployed, and third work or doles provided to the unemployed. Replies were returned from a majority of Dorset's divisions represented by a small number of parishes whose relief practices, according to Assistant Commissioner Okeden, were probably representative.<sup>32</sup> Child allowances were nearly universal in 1824 and commonplace in 1832, although by this later date relief did not generally begin until the third or fourth child.<sup>33</sup> Levels of relief were still calculated by reference to the price of a

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables C2.1, C2.3.

<sup>32</sup> *Third Report*, pp. 301-02.

<sup>33</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries (1834, XXXI), Question 24. Evidence of Edward Portman and John Illot from the Blandford Division; John Wasse and Thomas Hibberd from Blandford St Mary; Robert Salkeld from Fontmell Magna; Arthur Johnstone from Rampisham.

loaf.<sup>34</sup> Payments of wages out of the rates was less important in 1824 and had declined further in importance by 1832. And we know from the evidence of David Parry Okeden that a campaign to deny relief to able-bodied single men had been underway in parts of the county from at least 1824.<sup>35</sup>

The institution was obviously undergoing change by 1824 and the *Returns* from that year suggest that a line of total exclusion was being drawn against unmarried able-bodied men receiving relief in some divisions, while in others they were being offered work instead of relief and that work was not paid for out of the parish rate. In other words, farmers were being forced to employ the single able-bodied unemployed and could not obtain wages subsidies in return from the parish. It is not certain on what basis farmers were expected to employ this class of person but it is pretty clear that they were not receiving a wage subsidy for so doing.<sup>36</sup> We know from Okeden's *Third Report* that single men during this period had a great deal of trouble obtaining work except in harvest. As a result they were employed on a variety of parish make work schemes including gravel extraction and road mending.<sup>37</sup> Regular work was the preserve of the married man with a family and married labourers continued to have their wages subsidised in relation to the price of corn by the parish ratepayers. The origin of subsidised labour was the high prices and famine conditions of the 1790's and the refusal of Dorset farmers to raise wages. The practice of subsidising the wages of married men was self-reinforcing.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Question 25. Evidence from Edward Portman and John Illott from the Blandford Division; John Wasse and Thomas Hibberd from Blandford St Mary; Robert Salkeld from Fontmell Magna; Matthew Place from Hampreston; Francis Rogers from Longfleet.

<sup>35</sup> *Third Report*. pp. 300-303.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*



As David Okeden described it:

The scale system, which has continued to this day...saves the magistrates and overseers trouble, and enables the farmers who would not raise their wages with the price of corn, to lower them on the diminution of prices.

Thus the rise of the price of corn, or its fall, is equally seized on as a pretext for the continuation of the system of head money.<sup>38</sup>

The replies to the rural queries in 1832 point to the continuation of family allowances in Dorset, as the consequence of the preferred corporate policy of magistrates, and against the existence of a corporate policy of subsidising wages directly by reference to a bread scale. These data provide some confirmation that family allowances were seen by the gentry who supported intervention as the best method of tackling low wages in Dorset. Their intervention was consonant with a particular variant of political economy which held that it was excessive competition that lowered wages and was destructive of the social order.<sup>39</sup> Ten respondents to the rural queries, representing the eight responding divisions in the county, indicated that family allowances were paid under the belief that the magistrates would order such payments.<sup>40</sup> Two others, from Hampreston and Longfleet, replied that although they paid family allowances it was not the consequence of a corporate strategy and that both were Gilbert Act parishes where the writ of the magistrates at petty sessions did not run.<sup>41</sup> Four parishes returned answers in the negative: Chettle,

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Chapter five.

<sup>40</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries (1834, XXXIII), Question 43. Evidence of Edward Portman and John Illott from the Blandford Division; John Wasse and Thomas Hibberd from Blandford St Mary; John Venables from Buckland Newton; John Davis from Cerne Abbas; Robert Salkeld from Fontmell Magna; Henry Walter from Hazilbury Bryan; Nathaniel Brice from Longfleet; Arthur Johnstone from Rampisham.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Matthew Place from Hampreston; (1834, XXXI), Question 24. Evidence of Francis Rogers of Longfleet.



Moreton, More Crichel and Broadwey. Nevertheless these parishes were in petty session divisions where family allowances were the norm and the consequence of the corporate strategy of the divisional magistrates. One may conclude that the respondents from these parishes, James Frampton, David Okeden, Rev. Thomas Dade and Rev. John West were able to resist this corporate strategy because each of them was the principal landowner in his respective parish and each directly controlled the administration of poor relief as magistrates. They also indirectly controlled poor relief through their tenants on the vestry. As Okeden put it, making a virtue of the distribution of power between landlords and tenants:

the Magistrates acting for the Division of Cranborne...have found the best results from making the decision of the Select Vestry final. We rarely take the cases out of the hands of the Common Vestry never out of those of the Select Vestry.<sup>42</sup>

The answers to the questions of 1824 and 1832 show changes in the extent and form of assistance to the able-bodied, although it is probably fair to say that a comparison of any two years between 1802 and 1834 would disclose changes in the extent and form of assistance to the able-bodied. Pretty clearly assistance to able-bodied, single unemployed labourers was much reduced by 1834 and as clear is the raising of the limit before child allowances were paid. This is consistent with a mode of relief that referred to the traditions of patriarchal oeconomy. If there were constant changes in the extent and form of relief, as alleged in the historiography, then clearly they did not radically affect the relief of the family, although clearly some sort of campaign to deny outdoor relief to able-bodied single men was

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<sup>42</sup> *P.L.R.*, Answers to the Rural Queries (1834, XXXIII), Question 43. Evidence of D. O. P. Okeden from More Crichell.



underway in parts of Dorset from at least 1824. The *ad hoc* returns and indirect evidence on age structure versus expenditure levels independently show extensive assistance to the able bodied. It is much more likely, therefore, that the older interpretations with their emphasis on ephemeral, *ad hoc* schemes of relief have got it wrong and one other notable characteristic of the configuration of the poor laws in Dorset prior to 1834 was its relative stability. It is clear from the 1824 *Returns* that child allowances were ubiquitous in all of the divisions which made replies and that positive replies to similar questions in the 1832 Rural Queries suggest that child allowances were still the norm in Dorset.

We need now to ask ourselves how and why such a configuration came into being and was sustained in Dorset. Answers to these questions take us very far from the older interpretations and their emphasis on economic factors. Discussion of the poor laws in the last thirty-five years has been dominated by two distinct and partially overlapping preoccupations. Body's thesis may be seen as an example of some of the concerns found in the works of economic historians like Mark Blaug, James Huzel and others. They have argued that the poor law allowances were rational economic responses to managing the problems of transition in underdeveloped agricultural economies.<sup>43</sup> From this argument they have concluded that these

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<sup>43</sup> In the economic school see, M. Blaug, 'The Myth Of The Old Poor Law and The Making of the New', *J.Ec.H.*, 23 (1963), and his 'The Poor Law Report Re-examined'; J.S. Naylor, 'The Mythology of the Old Poor Law', *J.Ec.H.*, 29 (1969); D. McCloskey, 'New Perspectives on the Old Poor Law', *Ex.Ec.H.*, 10 (1973); B. A. Holderness, 'Open and Close Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Ag.H.R.*, 20 (1972); D.A. Baugh, 'The Cost Of Poor Relief in South East England, 1790-1834', *Ec.H.R.*, 28 (1975); J.P. Huzel, 'Malthus the Poor Law and Population in early Nineteenth Century England', *Ec.H.R.*, 22 (1969); G.S.L. Tucker, 'The Old Poor Law Revisited', *Ex.Ec.H.*, 12 (1975); From the Social School see, Brundage, *The Making of the New Poor Law*; 'The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law: A reply', *E.Hl.R.*, 90 (1975). Dunkley, 'Whigs and Paupers' and 'Paternalism, the Magistracy and Poor Relief in England, 1795-1834', *J.B.S.*, 20 (1981). A. Digby, *Pauper Palaces* (1978), 'The Labour Market and the Continuity of Social Policy after 1834, The Case of the Eastern Counties', *Ec.H.R.*, 28 (1975); and 'The Rural Poor Law' in D. Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (1976).



responses were therefore more correct than the remedies embodied in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

A similar revisionism was also underway amongst social historians. Anthony Brundage emphatically broke away from the older concerns with illustrating the 'Benthamite' origins of many of the pre-1834 reforms of poor relief. Using the example of landowners in Northamptonshire he focused instead on the poor laws as an arena in which issues of deference, paternalism and authority were articulated and resolved. According to Brundage the administration of the poor laws represented an authentic aristocratic concern to maintain the cohesion of rural society.<sup>44</sup> Peter Dunkley challenged and refuted (to his satisfaction) Brundage's conclusions. In a series of articles and a book he suggested that what Brundage had identified as an authentic aristocratic concern to maintain the cohesion of rural society was no more than a reflexive residual paternalism. It was more theatre than content.<sup>45</sup> It has been generally accepted that Dunkley got the better of this debate and his arguments against Brundage have been implicitly adopted by other historians. I would suggest that they are in error. Dunkley's analysis of the poor laws is derived from Poynter's earlier conclusion that there were 'few coherent views on poverty' at this period.<sup>46</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, his conclusion is derived from an anachronistic exploration of eighteenth and nineteenth century texts for evidence of twentieth century scientific knowledge.<sup>47</sup> Dunkley is therefore unable to appreciate that his analysis of the poor laws is distorted by reading eighteenth and nineteenth century

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<sup>44</sup> Brundage, 'The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law', pp. 346-49 and *The Making of the New Poor Law*, pp. 181-84.

<sup>45</sup> Dunkley, 'The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law', p. 838, and generally, *The Crisis of the Old Poor law in England*.

<sup>46</sup> J.R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief 1795-1834* (1969), p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> Chapter one.



debates on poverty through the lens of twentieth century social and economic theories. Such a reading has been characterised by Karel Williams as ‘a wayward disengagement’ from texts and the earlier historiography’.<sup>48</sup> What ever the fault’s of Brundage’s analysis, and his sample of Northamptonshire aristocracy was certainly skewed in favour of his initial premise, he at least attempted to set his arguments within the terms of deference and authority in use in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And following Brundage, I have also looked for the internal forms of coherence and logic in a discourse on the poor laws in Dorset that I have termed the burdens of the poor.

During this period the identity of the gentry landowner told the story of the poor in terms of their subordination and the obligations of the rich as the source of work and wealth. The obligations between the rich and poor went wider than their actual and discursive relationship in work to include older patriarchal relations of ‘liberality’ and ‘obedience’. I have termed this relationship the burdens of the poor. This phrase, like other linguistic terms such as ‘stewardship’ can be coded onto narratives of wealth-creation and it attaches moral as well as monetary values to the poor. It encompasses the patriarchal notion of the poor as deserving of their subsistence and as a category to be manipulated for profit by punishment or reward. It also encapsulates some of the terms of political economy which identified the increasing numbers of the poor as a burden and a loss to the rural economy of Dorset. As we have seen in chapter three, these narratives appeared in a variety of patriarchal guises and different places. They included God’s covenant with His children, as expressed at various points in the Bible and repeated in church pulpits, the Dorset

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<sup>48</sup> Williams, *Pauperism*, p. 22.

Assizes and religious pamphlets; the writings of the ‘civic humanists’ such as the third Earl of Shaftesbury; the economic theories of Sir James Steuart and Adam Smith; and the Romanticism of Kenelm Digby.<sup>49</sup> As the self-identities of the gentry were reconstructed so too were the identities of the poor changed. This chapter will explore the ways in which the governing purposes and the self-identities of the gentry were constructed partly in the changing terms of the discourse of the burdens of the poor.

The discourse the burdens of the poor did not ask ‘What is poverty, what are its causes and consequences?’ In asking ‘What are the burdens of the poor?’ the question depended on a conception of a relation between the capacities of a people to labour and the wealth and well being of Dorset society.<sup>50</sup> The poor are not treated as those afflicted by poverty but as a category which bears upon the economic well being of the county. The provision of ‘a necessary subsistence’ is reserved for the ‘industrious and peaceable poor’ at the discretion of the magistrates. In the terms of patriarchal oeconomy the discretion of the magistrates is characteristic of the wisdom of Solomon (I Kings 11:28). It is their duty to preserve the industry of the poor and sustain the rural hierarchy.

The most universally recognised benefit to the nation of preserving the subsistence of the poor was the consequent increase in population. From this increase followed the benefits of competition for work: the lowering of wages and the resulting increase in the industry of the labouring poor which was a source of wealth and stability.<sup>51</sup> The patriarch’s concern to keep wages low relative to prices is evidenced

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<sup>49</sup> Chapter three

<sup>50</sup> On contemporary conceptions of the relationship between wealth and labour see, for example, M. Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty. Toward a genealogy of liberal governance* (1991), p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.



in Hutchins' *History*. He notes that in the 1770's 'The price of labour has advanced, but, fortunately for the community at large, not in the same proportion [as provisions]'.<sup>52</sup> The benefits accruing to an increase in population depended in turn on a particular conception of the relation between rich and poor and a particular identity of the gentry. In return for the guarantee of subsistence the poor would submit to the authority of the gentry. From this it followed that the gentry identified themselves as in some ways the stewards of rural society. From the beginning of the wars with revolutionary France, the religious address which preceded each Assize in Dorchester became taken up with the discourse of the burdens of the poor. This included the terms of patriarchal relations of service and obligation between the rich and poor. In the Reverend Charles Fleet's address in March 1796 these relations of service were described in familial terms. The rich had the duty to, 'countenance and support by such means as their opulence and power give them, their brethren of mean condition'.<sup>53</sup> Fleet also located these reciprocal relations in the hierarchical nature of society. In an address to the Dorset magistrates assembled at the Dorchester Assizes in 1796 put it thus:

God Almighty...hath allowed several stations, and made each subservient to some general end. Hence those duties of liberality and relief to the poor from the rich:- service and obedience to the rich from the poor:- protection to the weak from the power of the great:- instruction to the simple from the wisdom of the wise. Thus we see, without subordination and subjection, no society can possibly subsist.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> J. Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, (Blandford, 1874), vol. 4, p. 118; see also Chapter Five.

<sup>53</sup> D.R.O., PE/SH/AL2/16, C. Fleet, *Four Sermons on Public Occasions Dedicated to E.B. Portman; Sermon Preached at Dorchester Azzizes, March 11, 1796* (Dorchester, 1796), p. 55.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Fleet continued his address with a rejection of the older Hobbesian political theories of the state of nature:

No society ever did subsist without [subordination and subjection]. In the first hordes or class of men, before any regular government existed, the wise, of course ruled the ignorant - the strong the weak. Let every soul therefore (saith the scripture) be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of GOD.<sup>55</sup>

Fleet's rendering of scriptural authority is complex. He argues that the condition of Dorset society, the relations between the rich and poor, is not derived from a state of nature but ordained by God. In that case these relations are the fundamental natural laws of God's Providence. These laws and relationships are revealed by Christian religion which teaches all men and women their respective social duties and obedience to the law and civil powers. In case this message was lost on his audience of magistrates and prisoners, he drew a careful picture in words of how and why God had ordained his Providence. He assured the poor that although they lived in a society of 'subordination and subjection', nevertheless God had not dealt unequally his blessings among the different classes of society. He first addressed his audience on the realities of society:

If the poor man be obliged to work - he hath health (the greater blessing) in return. If he hath not the wealth - he hath not the cares of the rich. If he hath not their delicacies of food - he hath not their ailments. If he hath not their power - he is not subject to the same envy and hatred they are. If he hath but few things to satisfy his wants - he hath but few wants to be

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*



satisfied. If he sees but little of the pleasures of life - he sees little of the temptations.<sup>56</sup>

This address, although couched in biblical terms, is also partly conducted on the terrain of politics. He continued his address by drawing attention to the rights and responsibilities of the rich and the poor:

Let the poor submit with cheerfulness to the order of Providence, which has placed them in that condition. Let us all act like men who are born to live in society together, and in mutual want of the assistance of each other - and since our civil and religious interests are so connected, as that the safety of one does ultimately depend on the prosperity of the other, and that Church and State cannot be well divided, but must STAND or FALL TOGETHER.<sup>57</sup>

Fleet's discourse on Providence and the sources of morality and stability was expressed in the formal language of patriarchal oeconomy but with the substance of politics and capitalist contract. The God of Fleet's Providence was no distant first legislator but an active presence, to whom 'the poor submit with cheerfulness'. In contrast the gentry had to acknowledge God's presence 'by such means as their opulence and power gives them'. The narrative parameters of the burdens of the poor encompassed the emerging form of political government in Dorset. The gentry were entrenched at the pinnacle of an hierarchical society by God's Providential contract with His Creation underpinned by an obedient, respectful and hard-working poor. This essentially political arrangement conceded to the gentry the capitalist contractual advantage of limited liability and they were granted an effective choice

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

to support, or not to support the poor.

These political arrangements were sanctified by Fleet during a period when the wages of the Dorset labourer fell significantly. In the fifty years after 1770 wages fell both in real terms and relative to the national trend. The wages of male labourers in particular failed to keep pace with the rise in prices of basic foodstuffs. In 1795, for example, they were eighty percent of their level fifteen years before.<sup>58</sup> The contributing factors to the decline in the value of real wages were complex and interrelated. Relative to the rest of England, Dorset came to have above average farm size by the eighteen-fifties.<sup>59</sup> The growth in farm size in the arable districts was a response to the capital intensive productive methods required of improving or high farming. As farms size grew so the demand for regularly employed labourers declined. Falling prices for grain and the capital requirements of high farming all contributed to a parallel decline in the number of small farmers employing family labour. In 1851 almost twenty percent of Dorset farmers employed no labour outside their immediate family. Almost 28 per cent (668) of the 2,396 farms recorded in the county, were less than 49 acres in extent. More than half (55 per cent) of these small farms employed no labour. Employment opportunities were concentrated in the 980 farms larger than 150 acres.<sup>60</sup> These large holdings, particularly in the arable areas of Dorset, had large seasonal requirements for labour and employed relatively few men and women the year round. Snell has argued that enclosure also had a significant detrimental impact on both employment and wages and that the post 1790's labour market in Dorset was characterised by both structural

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<sup>58</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor. Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 376, 414.

<sup>59</sup> *P.P.*, Accounts and Papers, Population (Census) of Great Britain, vol. 1 (1852-53, LXXXVIII).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.



and seasonal unemployment.<sup>61</sup> And more than three-quarters of parliamentary enclosures in Dorset took place after 1793 with 53,000 acres enclosed after 1800.<sup>62</sup> The seventeen nineties were also characterised by high cereal prices and deficient harvests. In particular the years 1794-6 and 1799-1801 were years of famine conditions in Great Britain.<sup>63</sup> Rising prices and falling wages and employment reduced demand for all kinds of goods other than food. In July 1795 the indefatigable George Boswell, sometime farmer, grocer and mercer, confided to his diary that 'though in the trade I am...there is scarce any money to be taken'.<sup>64</sup> In the same year the rural poor in Dorset directed their attentions to the activities of millers and bakers as the villains in reducing supplies of corn and driving up prices. Bakers in particular were subjected to *taxation populaire*.<sup>65</sup> Evidence of food rioting in Dorset in the period 1792 to 1800 is scarce but the riots which began in August during the 1800 harvests in England had reached Poole on the fourth of September and Blandford on the ninth.<sup>66</sup>

The Quarter Sessions Records for the 1790's show how the magistrates responded to the developing crisis in Dorset. One response to the shortage of wheat and the rising price of bread was that millers and bakers began selling corn and bread at less than statute measures. In this way it was possible to keep prices lower than they would otherwise have been and still sell flour and bread.<sup>67</sup> However, selling at less than the statute measure was interpreted by the magistrates as fraud and an attempt

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<sup>61</sup> Snell, *Annals*, pp. 151, 393.

<sup>62</sup> L.H. Ruegg, 'The Farming of Dorsetshire', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*, 15 (1854), p. 440; M.E. Turner, *English Parliamentary Enclosure* (Folkestone, 1980), p. 194.

<sup>63</sup> R. Wells, *Wretched faces. Famine in Wartime England 1793 - 1803*, (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 446-457.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>66</sup> H.O., Disturbance Papers, 42/41. Letter, J. Jeffrey, Mayor of Poole, to Portland, 8 September 1800; Letter, Bailiff of Blandford to Portland, 11 September 1800.

<sup>67</sup> D.R.O., QSM 3/11, Clerk of the Peace Minutes Book (1786-96), 29 September 1792.



to abridge the rights of the poor. Abridging the rights of the poor where bread was concerned was a very sensitive issue at a time when the revolution in France was proceeding apace. Resolutions were passed at meetings between landlords and their tenants to uphold the laws relating to statute measures by prosecuting 'all persons who should sell corn by any other than the statute measure'.<sup>68</sup> Prices continued rise, however, and disturbances grew. To the gentry landowners, who looked nervously at their revolutionary French neighbours across the Channel, the threat of revolution in Dorset seemed to be very real. Against this background some of the most active magistrates of the Dorchester Division (Lionel Damer, David Robert Michel, George Gould, Francis Steward, William Toogood, John Berkeley Burland, William Salkeld and George Hutchings) met privately to 'take into consideration the price of corn, and labourers wages'. They instructed the Clerk of the Peace to circulate the rest of members of the Commission of the Peace with details of the meeting, including the suggested level of allowances.<sup>69</sup> The letter contained the caveat 'that none but the Justices themselves should at present know of the intended meeting and the design'.<sup>70</sup> The reasons for the secrecy are not far to seek. The magistrates certainly did not want to stimulate support or opposition to the measures they were contemplating before those measures had been put into place. Any meeting which explored the relationship between the price of a food staple such as corn and the wage a man earned must surely have contemplated regulating the latter by reference to the former. They were in all likelihood anticipating opposition to the measures from ratepayers who would have to finance the costs of such subsidies.

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 October 1792.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 November 1792.



It is almost impossible to overstate the practical and narrative significance of the decision of the Dorset magistrates in 1792 to institute a system of child allowances paid out of the poor rates. Famine conditions obtained in much of rural England during the 1790's and the immediate background to this decision was the prospect of famine and revolt in Dorset.<sup>71</sup> Meeting in Quarter Sessions on the 1st December 1792 the magistrates ordered:

That having taken into consideration the difficulties the poor labour under, from the present high price of corn, and other necessities, the Justices within their respective divisions will make order on the parish officers on the complaint of every industrious and peaceable poor person, which shall appear to be well founded, to relieve him or her with such sum as shall make up, together with the weekly earnings of him, her and their family, a comfortable support for them.

And the Justices having thus provided for the necessary subsistence of the industrious and peaceable poor, declare their determination to enforce the laws against such as shall meet together for any unlawful purpose.<sup>72</sup>

The resolve of the Justices to resist 'Associations, Conspiracies and seditious and inflammatory publications' was reiterated at the Blandford Sessions in January 1793.<sup>73</sup> The magistrates' decision was translated in practical terms to a policy of allowances for large poor families and an allowance was paid for every child after the second for poor men or women. In July 1795 and again in October the Commission of the Peace ordered that no bread other than the Standard Wheaten

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<sup>71</sup> Wells, *Wretched Faces*, pp. 1, 58, 62, 91.

<sup>72</sup> D.R.O., Clerk of the Peace Minutes Book, 1 December 1792.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 16, 17 January 1793.

Loaf be sold in Dorset.<sup>74</sup> In July 1795 the members of the Dorchester Quarter Sessions ‘Resolved that the members of the said county be requested to apply to the Privy Council for an immediate supply of Imported Wheat into the Ports of Poole, Weymouth and Bridport.’ The magistrates were Anthony Chapman (chairman), Viscount Milton, Lionel Damer, Francis John Browne, William Morton Pitt, William Toogood, William Richards, Thomas Meggs, Francis Steward, John Calcraft, James Frampton, Louis Dymock George Tregonwell, William Coles Medlycott and Henry Sherive.<sup>75</sup> Within three months of their request for wheat, Sherive, Milton, Damer, Frampton, Browne and a newcomer, John Willett, were issuing warnings against adulterating the wheaten loaf.<sup>76</sup> Like the magistrates in Devon, the Dorset Commission of the Peace recorded in their minutes that they were not competent to regulate the making of bread in accordance with the law<sup>77</sup> and they wanted a Bill brought in to regulate ‘Millers, Mealmen and Dealers in Flour’.<sup>78</sup> In their petition to Parliament in December 1795, the members of the Commission recorded that it was of the utmost importance:

to avoid with great industry every other matter not expressly relating to the Provisions above mentioned in order to prevent the stirring any other questions involving the Corn and Flour Trade (i.e. the question of the free movement of provisions according to market price).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 and 14 July 1795; 31 October 1795.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 July 1795.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 October 1795.

<sup>77</sup> 13 George 3, cap. 62.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> D.R.O., Clerk of the Peace Minutes Book, 17 October 1795.



The continuing wheat shortages brought forth other recommendations from Dorset. In December 1795, Henry Bankes, addressing the House of Commons during the debate on lessening the consumption of wheat, argued:

He should therefore suggest to the House the propriety of prohibiting at once the making of bread of wheat alone, and leaving the different composition of bread to be a mixture of wheat, rye, barley, potatoes, Indian corn, as the case might require...he believed that the great mass of the people would not take it to be an injury if the higher classes set them the example of eating this bread. The higher classes could at present eat what bread they pleased but the lower classes were so far from it that they could not subsist upon the wages for their labour, and a vast number of them were obliged to subsist upon charity.<sup>80</sup>

The Dorset gentry proposed to lead by example and in a printed advertisement declared an intention to reduce their consumption of wheaten bread and flour by:

‘at least one third of the quantity consumed in ordinary times. Signed by H. Sherive, Lord Strafford, W.R. Jacobs, W.M. Pitt, L. Damer, J.H. Browne, J. Frampton, C. Ashley, F.J. Browne, M. Jones, F. Fane, G.T. Brice, W. Toogood’.<sup>81</sup>

Within a generation, however, the gentry’s responses to the famine years of the 1790’s, in particular their decision to subsidise wages, were being repudiated as backward and dangerous. The terms of the repudiation denied both the legitimacy of the modes of thought which underpinned the implementation of the order and the alleged undesirable outcomes. But in 1796 no less a person than the prime minister

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<sup>80</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 32 (1795), p. 1688.

<sup>81</sup> D.R.O. QSM 1/11, Quarter Sessions Order Books (1783-97), 12 and 13 January 1796.

William Pitt attempted unsuccessfully to introduce a Poor Bill which would place just such allowances for children on a statutory footing. Pitt addressed the terms of his proposal to the House of Commons and argued that parliament should:

make relief in cases where there are a number of children a matter of right and honour, instead of a ground of opprobrium and contempt. This will make a large family a blessing, and not a curse; and this will draw a proper line of distinction between those who are able to provide for themselves by their labour, and those who after having enriched their country with a number of children, have a claim upon its assistance for support.<sup>82</sup>

Pitt's address to Parliament was couched in the terms of patriarchal oeconomy. The industrious poor were worthy of their subsistence because they 'enriched their country' by increasing its population. What ever increased the size of the population was therefore a blessing. Notwithstanding parliament's rejection of a statutory allowance system, during the next few years magistrates implemented similar policies in other counties of southern and western England. The historiography would later classify their ad hoc responses to famine by the catch all term Speenhamland to encompass the variety of these policies.<sup>83</sup> During the next eighty years or so, at moments of danger, the resolution of 1792 and its alleged 'evil' consequences were constituted and reconstituted by the gentry as backward, naive or dangerous to the peace and prosperity of Dorset. As late as 1872, for example, against a background of falling wages and rising unemployment and the re-emergence of agricultural trades unionism, the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions,

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted in P. Sraffa and M. Dobb, (eds), *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*, 10 vols, (Cambridge, 1951), vol. I, p. 109.

<sup>83</sup> On the spread of 'Speenhamland' see, Wells, *Wretched Faces*, pp. 290-302.



Lord Portman, is to be found rehearsing the evils of the system and concluding:

[That wages should be]...a matter of bargain between master and man. That is clearly the right course of proceeding. There can be no doubt that every individual must make an individual contract with the master he wishes to serve or the man he wishes to employ.<sup>84</sup>

For Lord Portman, the certainties of the magistrate of 1872 are separated from the implied confusions of the magistrate of 1792 by a narrative gulf which renders the latter's interference in the natural workings of the rural economy almost incomprehensible. The tone of Portman's characterisation of the magistrates' decision to subsidise wages and the evidence I have adduced of the context of their decision, suggests most strongly that this episode was not simply an automatic determined response. The men who instituted this strategy conducted their deliberations in private and took great pains not to include parish officials or their tenant farmers in the discussions. The more we look at this decision the less determined and automatic it appears.

But how did the gentry imagine this solution to their perceived problem? There is some evidence to suggest that similar allowances schemes had been a periodic feature of the poor laws since their inception in the 16th century. In the dearth and high prices of 1757, John Toogood recorded in his diary how and why the principal inhabitants of Sherborne had subsidised the supply of wheat to poor families in Sherborne. He also advised his sons as to their conduct if similar circumstances should arise in the future and in so doing spoke across the generations to his lineal

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<sup>84</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, p.lx.

descendant, the magistrate William Toogood. John wrote:

If the like Circumstances happen hereafter in your Time and either of you are engaged in Farming Business, let not a covetous Eye tempt you to be foremost in advancing the Price of Corn, but rather let your Behaviour shew some Compassion and Charity towards the Condition of the Poor.<sup>85</sup>

And here is the first part of an answer: *Oeconomy*. Patriarchal oeconomy defined population growth and the maintenance of a subsistence for the poor as a source of household wealth. The establishment of family allowances was therefore perfectly consonant with the terms of household oeconomy. They were also consonant with the reality of the family as a unit of production. The pressure to maximise the family as a workforce not only required an early age at marriage (and early marriages were defined as improvident marriages in the litany against the fecundity of the poor in the nineteenth century) it also favoured producing as large a number of child labourers as possible. As Pinchbeck has argued, the low level of, 'Women's earnings set a premium on early marriage, while the employment available for children encouraged large families and increased the supply of labour out of all proportion to the demand [of agriculture]'.<sup>86</sup> The Dorset poor law reformer D.O.P. Okeden said that when ever he had asked the question of young men 'Why did you marry early?' he received the same answer: "I married to increase my income".<sup>87</sup>

The labour market in Dorset was characterised by structural unemployment and low wages with a consequent seasonal demand for labour. The practice of yearly hiring and living-in in was practically redundant as an aspect of the labour market by

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<sup>85</sup> D.R.O., D 170/1, MS Diary of John Toogood, 30 April, 1757.

<sup>86</sup> I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (1969), p. 179

<sup>87</sup> *Third Report*, p. 314.



the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>88</sup> Kussmaul estimates that by 1851 less than nine per cent of the agricultural workforce in Dorset was hired by the year.<sup>89</sup> The old poor law subsidies for married men with children which bound families to their parish or a farm had been justified by the gentry in the terms of patriarch's concerns with the subsistence of the household. The wage subsidies of the old poor laws were no longer easily made available. The farmers' insistence on the family as workforce may have been another (material) reason why the allowance system instituted in the crisis year of 1792 evolved into a subsidy for married men with children. The Northumberland bondager system of family hiring described by Howkins had its roots in the older practice of living in service and survived into the twentieth century. The bondager system required that every living-in regular worker had to provide a female worker to work with him.<sup>90</sup> Edward Stanhope, identified a similar practice in Dorset in the eighteen-sixties:

When a labourer is engaged by the year, the size of the family and the vigour of his wife and sons, becomes an important element for consideration as they are expected to go out to work when required. If the wife cannot go, she must send a daughter or [as I found in at least one parish] she must provide a substitute.<sup>91</sup>

It was low male wages which bound the married labourer and his family as the unit of farm labour. It was the family as a unit of production which enabled the farmers to pay low wages and also to displace the source of exploitation in family relations

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<sup>88</sup> Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor*, chapter 2., *passim*.

<sup>89</sup> A. Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 20.

<sup>90</sup> A. Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England. A Social History 1850-1925* (1991), pp. 50-53.

<sup>91</sup> *P.P.*, Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture (1867-68, XVII), Report by the Hon. E. Stanhope, p. 4.

themselves. The reverend Henry Moule of Fordington described one half of this equation of exploitation:

The smallness of the income of the agricultural labourer [means] that advantage should be taken of any help which the wife, or which any of the children, may afford to add to that income. This facilitates the practice, so unfair to the agricultural labourer, of hiring not the man alone, but his wife and family also; so that whilst he continues in the employ of his master, his wife and any boys old enough must work when required.<sup>92</sup>

‘So unfair to the agricultural labourer’. Here we have the reference to low wages but also the implicit reference to the ‘immorality’ of employing women at farm labour. Here is also an echo of Rudge and his ‘certain sphere of free agency to make the man revere himself as a man, and respect the opinions of his fellow men’.<sup>93</sup> Where is the free agency in being bound to low wages? How may a man revere himself as a man when he is forced to connive in the employment of his wife and children?

The strategy implemented by the Dorset magistrates in 1792 was conceived within the narrative traditions of patriarchal oeconomy which required for its consummation a public declaration of face to face relationships. This discursive relationship did not require a pre-determined line of division to be formally drawn against certain categories of applicant’s for relief but allowed for a selective strategy. The strategy of calculating family allowances on an arithmetic basis enabled the magistrates to withdraw from day to day relief confident that their appellate powers could enforce the scale if the parish refused to implement it. Of course, employers of labour also benefited from such a scheme which reduced their overheads and

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>93</sup> Chapter five.



allowed them to maintain profit margins in periods of rising or falling wheat prices. To those who have argued that what the farmers gained in subsidised wages they lost in poor rates, all the evidence demonstrates that farmers rented land at a price which reflected their burden of poor rates.<sup>94</sup>

The terms of oeconomy placed the patriarch at the head of the household with the sole responsibility to create wealth and impose discipline and order. The patriarch and not the market, determined the distribution of punishment and rewards. The Dorset magistrates' highly visible and active exertions to distribute rewards and punishment were implied by the terms of their order in seventeen ninety-two. It would be the magistrates who decided who would be relieved, and their intervention may have been designed to reassert their authority. Their decision to intervene directly on the side of the poor was certainly publicly advertised and rehearsed in the terms of the reciprocal obligations and duties of governors and governed in times of dearth. Their exertions on behalf of the poor were conducted within these patriarchal traditions which John Walter and Keith Wrightson have argued might actually strengthen the local authority of the gentry.<sup>95</sup> But if the order had the traditional form of patriarchal discourse which favoured the relief of married men with children, why did the magistrates gradually acquiesce to a practical strategy that gave relief automatically according to predetermined thresholds? Or put another way, why were the magistrates prepared to deny the patriarch's role to decide which of the poor would be punished or rewarded? The answer is in two parts. The first part of an answer is found in the political economy of eighteenth-century market theories of production and exchange. The new political economy of market

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<sup>94</sup> Chapter seven.

<sup>95</sup> J. Walter and K. Wrightson, 'Dearth and the Social Order in Early Modern England', *P&P.*, 71 (1976), pp. 40-41.



relations, which found its most lucid expression in *The Wealth of Nations*, was influential in the gentry's responses to dearth in the seventeen nineties.<sup>96</sup> Theories of market strategies and market prices which related to the internal distribution and price of wheat were gradually voiding the moral and economic imperatives of patriarchal oeconomy. But presented with a choice between interfering directly with the price of wheat or the price of labour, the gentry as landowners and beneficiaries of the markets for agricultural produce, chose to subsidise wages. The patriarch's obligations to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor were sacrificed to self-interest. Self-interest also provides the second part of an answer. The Commission of the Peace established a system of relief in a year of crisis, 1792, which bought peace in the countryside but at the price of the constant involvement of gentry magistrates. Although we have no reliable figures for the numbers of able-bodied poor relieved throughout the crisis years it is probable that the magistrates were overwhelmed by the numbers of appeals and reluctant to refuse relief at a time when revolution seemed to threaten. This new strategy could only work if the justices were prepared at all times to meet applicants and to grant or refuse relief under the same circumstances. But at this time the evidence suggests that there were only 28 active magistrates in the county at a time when the population would have been about 110,000 with at least 10,000 people receiving relief. (It is perhaps no coincidence that the numbers of men recruited to the Commission of the Peace started to rise during the 1790's).<sup>97</sup> The strategy seriously miscarried, however, and here we see the first part of an answer to explain the appearance of scales. The scales enabled the parish authorities to calculate the

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<sup>96</sup> E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1993), p. 276.

<sup>97</sup> Chapter two.



appropriate allowance according to a simple formula. The gentry ensured the enforcement of the scale system by allowing the 'industrious and peaceable' poor person refused relief by the parish officers to appeal to the appropriate justice who would make an order for relief.

The position of the Dorset magistrates in 1792, which much later Lord Portman would find so incomprehensible, was not a naive and backward adherence to an inappropriate and unscientific economic doctrine, or an example of paternalism towards the poor. These conclusions are derived from the inappropriate application of twentieth century terms of economic rationalism, and a confusion of the terms of patriarchy and paternalism. I would argue that we may understand the intervention of the magistrates in 1792 in the terms of oeconomy's concerns with the family and subsistence. It was the last great public affirmation in Dorset of a conception of poor policy and an identity of the poor constituted within the terms of the gentry's self identities as patriarchs; before these identities were irreparably fractured by the forms of state power in the early nineteenth century. It was part of the gentry's belief in their ability to implement make-work schemes and institute a proper administration of poor relief and employment to support the burdens of the poor. It was not the failure of the system to buy real social peace, or its costs, that undermined this policy in Dorset. The gentry's abdication of their beliefs in personal intervention in favour of arithmetic formulae had the unintended consequence that the poor also were assigned to formulaic categories to be watched and regulated rather than nurtured. The resurgence in evangelical theology and the influence of doctrines of political economy provided the language and terms by which that regulation could be ordered. Evangelical theology provided a discursive

wedge to invade and reconfigure a moral space beginning to be created by the gentry's gradual abandonment of the belief in a right to subsistence. The apparent failure of the allowance system to produce any sensible monetary or moral return on the gentry's investment opened up a moral space in the lives of the rich and the poor. This space was invaded by political economy and its theodicy of God's natural laws. These laws demonstrated the gentry's foolishness in believing that they could ever second guess His natural laws by demonstrating the inability of public relief ever to satisfy the burdens of the poor. The absorption of the poor within this system and the ways in which the system were held to corrupt the whole of rural society are the topics of my next chapter.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *The Contest between Paternalism and Political economy: The gentry and reform of the poor laws*

The Dorset gentry's sense of recurring moral crisis had gradually disinfested patriarchy of its vocabularies of rights determined and allocated by an individual's fortuitous and contingent relationships to the head of the family. This moral crisis did not fracture completely the gentry's ideas of themselves as in some way the stewards of the natural laws ordained by God. However, their notions of stewardship were differently interpreted in what may be loosely described as active and passive terms. Broadly speaking, those gentry who retained identities of themselves as the active stewards of God's Providence reserved for themselves the duty to interpret and apply His moral purposes and His natural laws on behalf of subordinates. In contrast, notions of passive stewardship insisted on a positive duty not to interfere with the workings of a Providence in which God himself did not intervene. This meant that the gentry's competing ideas about the poor laws and poor relief were inseparable from wider concerns raised by differences in their self-defined governing purposes.

The inscription of different moral purposes within gentry self-identities broadly defined two governing purposes. In one, the gentry were permitted and required to use poor relief to preserve the subsistence of the poor. In the other, the gentry were required to supervise the operation of natural laws which were the only certain source of subsistence. The gentry's different self-identities are not, therefore, indicative of a contest between patriarchy and paternalism but rather exemplify a

struggle between contrary meanings of moral development. With what terms are we left to describe and encompass the meanings of this struggle? The gentry's elision of contingent household relationships from their self-identities permits us to describe this as a struggle within a paternalist discourse of moral purposes and development. I have characterised the contrary meanings of struggle for moral development as material paternalism and moral paternalism.<sup>1</sup> Briefly, moral paternalists attempted to integrate and modify the doctrines of a naturalistic political economy; while material paternalists reacted against those same doctrines though seldom repudiating political economy as a mode of inquiry improper in itself.

Notwithstanding these differences, however, moral and material paternalists alike conducted themselves in a wider context in which each attempted to assert the primacy of their world view as the sole legitimate basis of the government of rural society. These terms are a convenient shorthand and describe models of paternalist relationships, not flesh and blood beings. They will be illustrated from the debates on poor relief in Dorset during this period. In particular they will be exemplified in the printed works of three of the county's most active participants in the debate: the active magistrates, David Parry Okeden, the Reverend Harry Farr Yeatman, and the Reverend Henry Walter. These men debated the terms of moral and material paternalism in a series of publications about the poor laws and poor law reform produced between 1830 and 1833.

In a stimulating and perceptive analysis of the influence of Evangelicalism on social and economic thought in the early nineteenth century, Boyd Hilton has argued

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<sup>1</sup> A.J.B. Hilton, *The Age Of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 87-88.



that 'it seems reasonable to suppose that the course of political economy may also have been affected by theological...assumptions'. He concluded that as a consequence of this interaction economic relations were defined as moral relations.<sup>2</sup> More recently Peter Mandler has taken up Hilton's analysis and suggested that the clerical country gentry played an important role in focusing their secular neighbours' 'considerable intellectual resources' on the 'divine truth hidden between the lines of Smith and Malthus: 'that human law could not gainsay those natural laws ordained by God's providence'.<sup>3</sup> The terms of this moral relationship were inseparable from the Dorset gentry's concerns for the management of the poor laws and the poor. The refocusing of their governing purpose saw the gentry begin to recast their self-identities in the terms of humankind's Divinely determined moral relationship to their environment.<sup>4</sup> As a result some of the gentry sought to stabilise the flux of competing ideas of paternalism, political economy and poor relief in terms of a moral relationship in order to remoralise the poor and the rest of Dorset society.

The social histories of early nineteenth century Dorset have asked several questions about the processes by which overseers, vestries and magistrates formulated poor relief strategies. Were they responding to pressure or advice from the parliamentary executive? Did strategy emerge through a process of political manoeuvre at the level of the vestry? To what extent, if at all, was there a conscious application of economic doctrine? Answers to these questions are largely negative and the formulation of poor law strategies is presented in terms of the gentry's absolute

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<sup>2</sup> Hilton, *Atonement*, p. x. Hilton identifies a similar dichotomy in paternalist discourses which he has termed individualist paternalism and economic paternalism.

<sup>3</sup> P. Mandler, 'The Making of the New Poor Law *Redivivus*', *P&P.*, 117 (November, 1987), p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter three.



commitment to the social control of the poor.<sup>5</sup> One variant of this interpretation describes poor relief as an element in a paternalist armoury of traditional customary relations implemented to maintain the social cohesion of rural society. The gentry are able to impose this control because they are said to share a homogeneous paternalist ethos. Thus poor relief buys social peace directly in exchange for small doles.<sup>6</sup> A more sophisticated interpretation suggests that social control was achieved more indirectly. A unified class of gentry landowners reinterpret their paternalist ethos in the terms of political economy. This newly defined paternalism and its world view are used by the gentry to train up the poor and the administrators of poor relief (broadly speaking, the farmers) in the ways they should go.<sup>7</sup> When one looks closely at the meanings of the so-called paternalist ethos, however, they turn out to be multiple and unstable. So much so, that the gentry had to reconstitute their meanings in ways to stabilise this flux. In so doing they referred also to their self-identities to create a sense of common agency and purpose from their competing ideas of paternalism.

In his pioneering study of paternalism in early Victorian England, David Roberts argued that paternalism 'did not exist as a set of definite, logical, and clearly defined axioms'. He nevertheless considered that it was possible to construct a 'model of paternalism'. This model comprised four basic assumptions about the framework of society: it should be authoritarian, hierarchic, organic and pluralistic. Roberts also

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<sup>5</sup> The principal contributors to this debate are: George Body, 'The Administration of the Poor Laws in Dorset, c.1760-1834, With Special Reference to Agrarian Distress in 1830' (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 1965); K.P. Bawn, 'Social Protest and Public Order in Dorset, c.1780-c.1838' (PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1984); Barbara Kerr, *Bound To The Soil: A Social History of Dorset 1750-1918* (1968); also 'The Dorset Agricultural Labourer, 1750-1850', *PDNHAS*; M.J. Flame, 'The Administration of the Old Poor Laws In Poole, c.1760-c1834', (BA thesis, Bournemouth University, 1985); also 'The Politics of Poor Law Administration in the Borough of Poole 1835-c.1845', *PDNHAS*, 108 (1986).

<sup>6</sup> Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, pp. 199, 245.

<sup>7</sup> Mandler, 'The Making of the New Poor Law *Redivivus*', p. 152.



argued that the ‘conscientious paternalist of superior rank’ felt he must perform three principal sets of duties. He had a duty to rule. This included such public duties as the suppression of crime and disorderly conduct, and the more private duty to manage economically and efficiently his own private property. He had a second duty to guide the poor by exerting a firm moral superintendence. His final duty was to help the poor by a variety of benevolent charitable schemes such as clothing and coal clubs and through supporting parish schools. These duties offered benevolence in return for absolute dependant obedience. The moment those dependent on a landowner claimed they knew what was best for themselves, the paternal relation would give way to a relation between equals.<sup>8</sup> Roberts also suggested that there was a fourth attitude that attached itself to paternalism ‘that morality should govern all relations, including economic ones’.<sup>9</sup> It was just at this point that his analysis stopped and the nature of the relationship between economics and morality was not more fully explored. Had he done so, it is probable that Roberts would have noticed that it was not so much that morality should govern economic relations but that economic relations were moral relations. There was no logical separation between the economic and moral spheres.

We have seen how different ideas of the parish allowed different magistrates to implement different governing roles.<sup>10</sup> Some magistrates assumed a duty and responsibility to directly intervene in the social and economic affairs of the parish while others limited their role to supervise the operation of contractual relations. In the terms of Robert’s model of paternalism there was a distinctive and obvious

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<sup>8</sup> D. Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (1979), pp. 1-2, 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter five.

dichotomy in paternalist discourse. On the one side there was the older form of patriarchal narrative with its emphasis on active stewardship to maintain the natural rights of the poor to their subsistence. On the other side was the narrative of Divinely specified natural economic laws that insisted subsistence was dependant on individual striving. The latter narrative retained much of the formal language of oeconomy but repudiated its central premise that it was proper and safe to intervene directly to regulate economic relations. Intervention was therefore also determined by different understandings of human nature, in particular character and independence. The terms of contemporary ideas of character and independence are explored in more detail below. For the present I will continue to explore the differences within the discourses of paternalism, differences I have labelled moral and material.

The terms of material paternalism described an optimistic belief in the spiritual nature of the poor in terms that character improved when environment was improved first. The terms of this narrative were employed to explain and justify direct intervention to raise wages and assist labourers to become “independent” in the market for labour in Dorset. Harry Farr Yeatman was confident that his imposition of a Labour Rate in the parish of Stalbridge had positive effects on the moral characters of labourers. The moral characters of the men employed and paid by this method had been put on a par with those of the independent labourers. He was confident that no:

evidence of any kind has been adduced to shew that the Paupers (in Stalbridge) were “Thriftless” or improvident, least of all immoral...nothing



has been stated by word of mouth or otherwise to show that the moral character of the Poor of Stalbridge are different in their degrees.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast, the terms of moral paternalism articulated an emphasis on individual striving to overcome difficulties. Addressing the Pitt Club in May 1831, the Dorset landowner, Lord Eldon remarked that:

He gloried in the fact, and it was noble and delightful to know that the humblest in the realm might, by a life of industry, propriety, and good moral and religious conduct, rise to eminence. All could not become eminent in public life-that was impossible; but every man might arrive at honour, independence, and competence.<sup>12</sup>

Eldon framed his observations in the terms of the positive consequences of individual endeavour for 'the humblest in the realm' but the narratives of moral paternalism were often articulated in terms of the inherent honesty but moral weaknesses of the poor. In the words of David Parry Okeden, the poor were 'helpless as children' and required 'constant watching' if they were not to succumb to the temptations of vice and immorality and 'drunken excesses'.<sup>13</sup> According to Okeden, the poor in Dorset had been constantly tempted by poor law allowances - 'the indiscreet charity of the ruling class' - which interfered with the natural order of things.<sup>14</sup> As a result of this 'Scale system':

The character and habits in the labourer has been...completely changed.

Industry fails, moral character is annihilated, and the poor man of twenty

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<sup>11</sup> P.R.O., MH12/2846: Correspondence with the P.L.C. Letter H.F. Yeatman to P.L.C. [date illegible] February 1835.

<sup>12</sup> H. Twiss, *The Public and Private Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon, With Selections From His Correspondence* (1844), vol. 2, p. 127.

<sup>13</sup> *Third Report*, p. 312.

<sup>14</sup> D.O.P. Okeden, *A Letter To Members Of Parliament For Dorsetshire On The Subject Of Poor Relief And Labourers' Wages* (Blandford, 1830), pp. 9-10.

years ago who tried to earn his money and was thankful for it, is now converted into an insolent, discontented, surly, thoughtless pauper, who talks of “right” and “income”....he finally yields to the temptations of the pay-table and the scale, feels his bondage, puts off his generous feelings of industry and gratitude and independence.<sup>15</sup>

As I have suggested, Robert’s model of paternalism conceals distinctive material and moral ideologies. These embody different assumptions concerning the nature and role of capitalism, for example, the *correct* principles of political economy or the *proper* relationship of man to his environment and to God. These assumptions also encompass different stereotypes of poor working men and women. Experience and prejudice created and reinforced stereotypes of the poor as either helpless but honest, or dissolute and devious, and in turn these stereotypes also helped to influence gentry concepts of the possibility of reforming the moral characters of the poor. Material paternalists embodied a belief that character could improve if social conditions were improved first and that social harmony was, partly at least, a function of environment. In the context of the poor laws material paternalists believed that it was safe to relieve the able-bodied poor by a judicious implementation of allowance schemes. In contrast, the narrative of moral betrayed a profound pessimism concerning the perfectibility of the working classes. Because material improvement could only come about because of moral growth, it could never be safe to improve the material conditions of the poor before their characters were reformed. For moral paternalists, therefore, the old poor laws were seen as perpetuating the worst of all possible worlds. First, they were a positive check to the

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<sup>15</sup> *Third Report*, p. 314.



reformation of the so called idle poor and second they interfered with the natural laws of the market. The editor of the *Dorset County Chronicle* put it thus:

No measure [poor law allowances] can be really beneficial which attempts to substitute the force of law for the course of circumstances, and interferes with those relations of society which are rooted in the very nature of things. Labour is as much a saleable article as manufactures or agricultural produce, and the working man has the same right to his chance in the market as the manufacturer or the agriculturist.<sup>16</sup>

The editor of the *Chronicle* intentionally intermixes economic and theological assumptions in order to suggest that economic relations, the labourers 'chance in the market', were moral relations. He uses the discursive terms of moral paternalism to argue that the 'force of law' determines that labour is a marketable commodity.

The ideas of market logic were often refuted in terms of necessity by material and moral paternalists. Take for example John Calcraft's opposition to the sliding scale in the Corn Bill in 1813, which he thought would increase the price of bread to the poor. He told his fellow Members:

The House might be cautious how they raised the price of the means of subsistence beyond what the wages of labour could purchase; if they did so, we must revert to the system we had followed during the war - that was, paying the wages of agricultural labour out of the poor-rates...Nothing but necessity could justify such an expedient.<sup>17</sup>

Here we have also the justification from necessity of an active stewardship to provide allowances. This justification to provide for the subsistence of the poor was

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<sup>16</sup> *D.C.C.*, 12 October 1826.

<sup>17</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 29 (1815), p. 1018.

later used by Henry Bankes. During the parliamentary debate on agricultural distress in 1822, he told the House that:

He had been of opinion that government should directly interfere and expend one million in purchasing corn [to support the poor]. As a general principle he was ready to allow the impropriety of such interference; but in circumstances of particular exigency, relief should be given according to the nature of the exigency.<sup>18</sup>

According to Bankes, the necessity which prompted active stewardship to subsidise bread or labour should never be interpreted as a general principle. And he acknowledged, such active stewardship had a moral downside. It operated against God's natural laws which compelled men to labour for their living. Moral paternalists never tired of demonstrating how interference with the natural laws of the market place destroyed the industrious habits of the poor and thus demoralised them. This equation of cause and effect was succinctly described by the evangelical Member of Parliament for Weymouth, Thomas Fowell Buxton. He told the House of Commons:

There was nothing but the poor laws which caused this. The evil would long ago have remedied itself had it not been for the poor-rates; for either the workmen would have abandoned (their) trade, and applied themselves to some other occupation, or the masters must have raised their wages.<sup>19</sup>

Material paternalism had an answer in terms of the active steward's concerns to maintain the industry of the poor in times of high prices. 'It has been said', Calcraft

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, (New Series) vol. 7 (1822), p. 363.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 40 (1819), p. 343.



told the House in 1815:

would you have raised the wages of labourers to twenty shillings and twenty-five shillings a week, which has often been paid of late to large families? In [my] opinion it would have been better to do so than resort to the expedient in question [allowances].<sup>20</sup>

As Calcraft's argument suggests, the ideas of stewardship within material paternalism had a further riposte to market determined wages. The poor deserved their subsistence because their labour was more than a mere commodity; it was a power which pertained to living human beings. Thomas Single put it like this.

Writing in the *Trades' Newspaper* in 1825 he argued:

To call labour a commodity that is to be bought in the market like wheat or any other article, is sheer nonsense - the one is a shadow, the other a substance. Before you can order Englishmen to be worked like cattle, you must first deprive them of all natural passions and feeling which are implanted by God.<sup>21</sup>

Here we have an expression of the belief in a natural wage determined by the subsistence necessary for a comfortable existence. We hear also echoes of William Cobbett's *Address to the Journeymen and Labourers*. Writing in 1816, Cobbett alleged that 'the real strength and all the resources of a country, ever have sprung, and ever must spring from the *labour* of its people'. It followed from this that labourers possessed an inalienable 'right to have a living out of the land of our birth in exchange for our labour duly and honestly performed'.<sup>22</sup> As Raymond Williams

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 29 (1815), p. 1018.

<sup>21</sup> *Trades Newspaper*, 13 November 1824, quoted in *Class and Conflict in Nineteenth-Century England, 1815-1850*, (ed.) P. Hollis (1973), p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> W. Cobbett, *Tour of Scotland* (1833), quoted in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1986), p. 837.



has shown, Cobbett passionately believed that hard work was rewarded by a right to subsistence which took precedence over the laws of supply and demand. He nevertheless entirely accepted the principle of market exchange while criticising its manipulation. Cobbett sought not the overthrow of political economy and the ownership of private property, but rather the extension of its market principles to the propertyless.<sup>23</sup> Here is the crux of the tension between moral and material paternalism. Whether the market is the only mechanism of rational exchange of goods and labour, in which case it should govern all aspects of economic life. Or whether it is possible to have an economy regulated by market prices which obeys, at least in part, a non-market logic. And a non-market logic would be used to justify poor law allowances and interventions in the market for labour in Dorset.

These tensions are not noticed in the historiography of the old poor laws in Dorset. For example, David Parry Okeden's critique of poor relief published during his period in office as an assistant commissioner to the Royal Commission in 1832 strictly qualified the limits of paternalism with reference to economic individualism. He also referred to the realities of class conflict and defined the distribution of class power within the old poor laws as the source of social instability. The subtleties of his arguments are not noticed at all.<sup>24</sup> Neither is it noticed that Harry Farr Yeatman's rebuttal of Okeden's alleged 'inhuman' prescriptions for poor law reform was premised on an entirely opposite analysis. Yeatman argued that the poor laws could effectively mediate the worst excesses of private property and class conflict by regulating the economic and social relations of farmers and labourers.<sup>25</sup> Instead both

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<sup>23</sup> R. Williams, *Cobbett* (Oxford, 1983), p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> *Third Report*, pp. 310-12.

<sup>25</sup> H.F. Yeatman, *An Inquiry Into The Merits Of The Poor Law Report Of D O.P. Okeden Esquire, Assistant Commissioner, By Harry Farr Yeatman, LLB*, (Sherborne, 1833), pp. 56-58. See also the favourable review of Yeatman's attack on Okeden's *Report* in *Cobbett's Magazine* (August, 1833).



are characterised as paternalists, differentiated only by their separate prescriptions for ameliorating the consequences of poverty to maintain the social order. Body, for example, argued that their separate prescriptions for poor relief were a reflection of the different economic circumstances confronting each of them compulsively in their respective petty session divisions of Shaftesbury and Sturminster. He emphasised that in 1833 Yeatman conceded the bread scale could be abandoned in areas of Dorset where economic conditions were more favourable than those prevailing in the Sturminster division.<sup>26</sup> This ignores entirely the fact that Yeatman proposed only to abandon one particular method by which allowances paid to an unemployed or underemployed labourer could be calculated. Although Yeatman conceded that the blanket use of the bread scale was impolitic, he still adhered to the absolute necessity for landowners in their capacity as magistrates to set the effective rate of wages. Yeatman argued that the existing power structure in Dorset could only be maintained by regulating the labour market. He continued to attempt to impose a general labour rate on the whole of Dorset up to the establishment of the first New Poor Law unions in 1835.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, Okeden saw any attempt to regulate the supply of labour and the rate of wages as destructive of the social order. Addressing the county's representatives in parliament in 1830, he argued that the:

Poor laws are become a web of intricate and tangled niceties...a system crowded with quibbles and replete with contradictions (and) hence amongst the classes mutually dependant upon each other, and who ought to be inseparably united, arise misconception, reproaches, discontent, oppression,

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<sup>26</sup> Body, 'The Administration of the Poor Laws', p. 242.

<sup>27</sup> D.R.O., PE/SN: VE1/1: Sturminster Newton Vestry Minutes, 30 November 1831.

resistance, and hatred; until the one gives without charity, and the other receives without gratitude.<sup>28</sup>

Okeden defined the effects of poor law subsidies to able-bodied male labourers in opposition to a cultural definition of the natural order of things. The natural order of things had been constituted by the gentry as a relationship between rich and poor partly in the terms of stewardship and partly in the terms of natural laws.<sup>29</sup> To undermine or deny this relationship by interfering with the natural order of things was also to undermine and deny the gentry's self-identity as the natural rulers of rural society. To propose to reform the poor laws, therefore, was also to propose to reconstitute and reaffirm the gentry's identity of themselves and re-present their interests as the interests of the whole of rural society.

These very real differences in economic doctrine and religious temperament are denied in the social and economic histories of Dorset. They have instead been transmuted into an all embracing culture of "agrarian capitalism". This homogeneous culture is said to co-exist uneasily with an equally all pervasive paternalist ethos which underpinned the social conduct of clergy, gentry and landed aristocracy alike.<sup>30</sup> A cursory acquaintance with the public and private correspondence of the gentry and their allies, however, reveals a complexity of competing political, theological and economic ideas, particularly ideas of poor law reform. For example, critics of the old poor laws like David Parry Okeden, James Frampton, Thomas Fowell Buxton and Henry Walter deployed their criticisms within a framework that described economic relations as moral relations. Their

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<sup>28</sup> Okeden, *Letter*, pp.7, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Chapter three.

<sup>30</sup> Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, p. 199.



conceptual framework was distinct from the doctrines, values and beliefs of supporters of poor relief like Harry Farr Yeatman and John Calcraft. Yeatman and Calcraft were staunch defenders of the old poor laws, or rather defenders of a particular set of principles in the management of poor relief. They defended poor relief as a bulwark to exclude the effects of unfair competition. It was unfair competition that made men immoral because it destroyed the subsistence and the industry of the poor. Calcraft, for example, often conducted his defence of the old poor laws on this premise. He believed that it was monopoly capitalism, unfairly assisted by regressive taxation, which demoralised the poor. Monopoly capitalism and the unfair competition it promoted undermined the capacity of small capitalists to compete and stay in business as employers of labour. It was unfair taxation, not the poor rates, which reduced opportunities for the poor to labour and to lead moral lives. The Excise, he told parliament in 1824 'was the protector of large capitalists, and the formidable enemy of the small traders...Nothing would give such elasticity to the enterprising spirit of the country, as an extensive relief from taxation'.<sup>31</sup> This dichotomy between support for large and small scale production was informed by the gentry's competing prescriptions of the ideal parish.<sup>32</sup> It was also influenced by what Berg has described as the 'advent of political economy' during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Moral and material paternalists were seldom to be found on opposite sides of a simple dividing line separating advocates of political economy from those who denied that it had any proper methodological role to play. The

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<sup>31</sup> *Hansard* (New Series), vol. 11 (1824), pp. 776-79, 1474. For a similar promotion of small scale capitalist production against monopolistic capitalism but offered from the other side of the political divide in Dorset, see, J. Penny, *Practical Retrenchment The Legitimate Object Of Reform* (Sherborne, 1832)

<sup>32</sup> Chapter five.

<sup>33</sup> Berg, *The machinery question and the making of political economy 1815-1848*, (Cambridge, 1982), p. 32.



distance between the two discursive positions, as we have seen above, was created by the more subtle inscriptions of moral purpose within gentry self-identities.

Material and moral paternalists alike could agree with Henry Walter vicar of Hazilbury Bryan, that the gentry ‘ought to be not only respected, but loved by the people, and that it is essential to the peace and welfare of [our] country, that [we] should be looked up to by the peasantry as their friends.’ But, Walter continued, ‘if the magistrates’ allowances come up [to the wishes of the poor], he is held to have conferred no obligations; for he tells them that his order is what the law makes it his duty to grant, and they believe him’.<sup>34</sup> The result of what Okeden characterised as the indiscreet charity of the gentry was to remove the poor’s incentive to labour and to put an unfair burden of rates upon the small employer of labour.<sup>35</sup> A material paternalist like Harry Farr Yeatman could concur entirely in Walter’s proposition that the poor should look up to the rich. He could also concur in Okeden’s arguments of the necessity to foster an efficient and productive labour force. Yeatman was, after all, an employer of labour who managed his own large estate in north Dorset on strict business principles. Nevertheless Yeatman was still puzzled. He wanted to know how any poor man could be expected to honour his obligations to his rich neighbour if that neighbour was neither able to employ him or willing to relieve him with the aid of poor rates when out of employ?<sup>36</sup> Yeatman showed a greater sensitivity than Okeden to the dilemmas of working class existence and the causes of low wages. How in glutted labour markets with a highly seasonal demand for employment, competition for work drove down wage levels. How labourers had

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<sup>34</sup> H. Walter, *A Letter To The Rev. H.F. Yeatman, LLB. From Henry Walter B.D. & F.R.S.* (1833), p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> *Third Report*, p. 312.

<sup>36</sup> Yeatman, *An Inquiry*, p. 9.



therefore to work doubly hard during the summer months merely to provide subsistence for their families. And how there was never any surplus to see the working class family through the short-time working and unemployment of the winter months. What, Yeatman inquired, did Okeden expect the poor to do in such circumstances if poor relief was denied to them - that they should die in a ditch? What price the social order then?<sup>37</sup> Yeatman was reiterating Calcraft's argument that wages were regulated not by the price of articles but by the competition of labourers. This competition was artificially stimulated by speculation, excessive taxation and the monopoly capitalism of large tenant farmers.<sup>38</sup> According to Yeatman, it was this artificial competition that had created a 'redundant population' in Dorset. When this population coincided with a depressed agriculture, the results were entirely predictable. In Calcraft's words: 'This competition had actually so reduced the amount of wages, that even those who were employed, were unable, in a great degree, to maintain themselves without parochial assistance.'<sup>39</sup>

Okeden offered a diametrically opposite analysis of the relationship between wages and competition. He argued that it was the absence of competition that 'systematically depressed wages' and inferred from this that a free market for labour in Dorset would increase wages in relation to prices.<sup>40</sup> Many of the terms of this debate were the familiar terms and phrases of patriarchal oeconomy. Both sides of the debate talked about an increase in population; the manipulation of the poor; hierarchical relations of obedience; and the creation of wealth. Take, for example, William Stevenson's equation of population growth, subsistence and agricultural

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Hansard* (New Series) vol. 5 (1821), pp. 1129.

<sup>39</sup> Yeatman, *An Inquiry*, p. 9; *Hansard* (New Series), vol. 37 (1817), p. 135.

<sup>40</sup> Okeden, *Letter*, p. 9.

improvement in his *General View* of the farming of Dorset. Stevenson celebrated the intellectual satisfactions of large-scale, improving farming in Dorset and the ways in which population growth could stimulate economic growth. Indeed, in his opinion the population of the southern districts of the county was deficient by some 30,000 for the proper performance of farming.<sup>41</sup> At the same time he also deprecated the practice of using the poor rates to maintain the subsistence of the poor in order to increase population. This practice, he thought, might achieve its objects in the short term. In the longer term, however, rewarding the poor for their fecundity would tend to destroy their industry and thus their incentive to compete. He told the gentry:

This is a subject, therefore, of national interest, to consider whether those improvements in agriculture which are founded on an increase of the poor, and all the evils attendant on indigence, may not contain the germ of destruction to all the best interests of mankind.<sup>42</sup>

We may see in the terms of Stevenson's attack on the poor laws how the substance of oeconomy was being challenged by market theories. The substance of oeconomy was the duties of the rich in terms of stewardship and maintaining the subsistence of the poor. It encouraged an increase in population as a source of wealth. In contrast, market theories required that an increase in population could only be made to coincide with the creation of wealth if there was a reciprocal increase in competition. Any increase in competition was naturally followed by a decrease in the price of wages. In the eyes of a moral paternalist, competition for labour was no

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<sup>41</sup> W. Stevenson, *General View of the Agricultural Survey of the County of Dorset; with Observations on the Means of its Improvement* (1815). p. 460.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 455.



more and no less than the poor man's opportunity to be exposed to the trials and temptations of God's providence. Okeden, for instance, wanted the labouring poor freed from poor law allowances to experience the chastening and educative effects of providing their subsistence by their own efforts.

Okeden certainly believed that the polity existed to maximise economic freedom, but he did not believe the polity should provide the means to enable all the people to aspire to the ownership of property. Here was a bridge between moral and material paternalists. They shared a common belief in the efficacy of promoting savings amongst the poor through sponsorship of savings banks and less frequently of village benefit clubs, and the establishment of allotments.<sup>43</sup> Neither side of the divide wished to create a class of petty capitalists, however, but simply sought to assist the poor to lessen the impact of unemployment on their lives.<sup>44</sup> Both recognised that wages in Dorset were generally inadequate to supply a surplus of wages for saving and both agreed that the labourer was worthy of his hire. Okeden went further and as early as 1830 had attempted to identify the separate elements in labour that should be recognised and rewarded by a fair day's wages. Addressing his fellow magistrates he argued that:

A labourer shall receive from his employer such wages as shall enable him to lay by a provision for age, sickness, and infirmity [and] that not receiving such wages, he should when those ills fall upon him, be supported by the persons who employed him in his youth, health and vigour.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> H.F. Yeatman, *Inquiry into the County Rate* (Dorchester, 1828), p. 81; *D.C.C.*, 14 April 1831.

<sup>44</sup> *Third Report*, p. 311.

<sup>45</sup> Okeden, *Letter*, p. 5.

The principle of maintaining the subsistence of the poor was never a point of dispute for material paternalists. Yeatman wholeheartedly supported this fine principle but, he asked Okeden, who would compel the farmer to pay a fair day's wages? Yeatman's question went to the heart of the divide between material and moral paternalists. Yeatman's rejection of Okeden's arguments was the product of an alternative interpretation of agrarian capitalism and like Calcraft he seems to have held to the view that competition could only operate to reduce wages. His objection to reform was rooted in the fruits of his experience and the confusion that other material paternalists experienced in trying to comprehend how simply liberating the market for labour would compel farmers to provide wages sufficient to compensate the labourer in sickness and old age for the use of his 'health, youth and vigour'; or how abolishing poor relief to the able-bodied would preserve the social order. In any case, Yeatman noted bitterly, promises to raise wages were carried out during 1830 but only for a sort while before the farmers reduced them again in a 'manner most treacherous and dishonourable'.<sup>46</sup> It was quixotic to claim that outdoor relief had the effect of 'the poor man attributing his travails to the greedy forbearance of the rich' when in fact it was only the operation of that so-called greedy-forbearance that prevented the poor from starving.<sup>47</sup> Yeatman's mounting incredulity was only increased by Okeden's insistence that amendment of the poor laws alone would liberate the labour force from the tyranny of glutted markets by assisting to free the circulation of labour. Neither reform of the poor laws, nor increasing competition for labour, Yeatman argued, could alter the impact on the lives of the poor of cyclical depressions in agriculture: hadn't Okeden conceded as much himself in his

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<sup>46</sup> Yeatman, *An Inquiry*, p. 15.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*



letter to the Members for Dorset in 1830?<sup>48</sup> The principle reason why the poor had never with justice attributed their misfortunes to the ruling class was that the magistrates had always in the past cushioned the blow of such fluctuations by sanctioning various allowance and employment schemes as ‘the poor man’s right’.<sup>49</sup> As Frederick Trenow, the rector of Langton Herring, argued, to remove from the members of the ruling class the ultimate power of arbiting poor relief, and to cast the poor to the economic winds and the uncertain mercies of farmers in their capacities as overseers, was to risk both peace and property in Dorset.<sup>50</sup>

Above all else, Okeden and Yeatman were divided over the exercise of their responsibility as governors of rural Dorset. Material and moral paternalists alike, believed absolutely that the social order and its economic activities were integrated parts of a divinely ordained natural order. But the former argued that such an organic entity was dependant for its survival on the active intervention of the gentry in order to manage mankind’s progression to moral perfectibility. Moral paternalists, by contrast, believed that they had a positive responsibility not to tamper with the mechanisms of the natural order in which God himself did not intervene. They believed that social stability flowed naturally from the free and unfettered operation of natural market laws which imposed their own moral disciplines on social and economic relations. Moral paternalists saw that it would be necessary still to supervise the activities of labourers and farmers. Okeden, for example, was adamant that the gentry should not abdicate entirely their older patriarchal identities but recognise that the agricultural poor were ‘helpless as

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> P.R.O., MH12/2885: Correspondence of the Dorchester Poor Law Union. Letter, Frederick Trenow to P.L.C. (n.d. but postmarked November 1834).

children', and in their new found economic freedom would, 'require constant watching, and advice and aid'.<sup>51</sup> There is no contradiction here and Okeden's concerns are with the suppression of all those acts that tended towards the disruption of the natural order, in particular interfering with natural economic laws by subsidising labour from the poor rates. By that routine, as Okeden pithily remarked, 'we have absolutely disorganised, as far as one class of men are concerned, all the common rules of social life'. Henceforward, he concluded, 'Let the farmer and his labourers make their own free and unfettered bargains, and let us as magistrates confine ourselves to the seeing, when we are called upon, that both parties fully and fairly complete their contracts.'<sup>52</sup>

This quote from Okeden encapsulates a fundamental fracture within paternalist discourse in Dorset. The discourse of material paternalism defined and regulated relationships before they were entered into. The discourse of moral paternalism regulated and supervised those relationships after they had been consummated. Moral paternalism was not opposed to principles of achievement and competition implicit in a purely contractual relationship and Okeden's political analysis of the social benefits of a free market for labour entailed certain social benefits. It promised that the equilibrium of Dorset's rural society could be effectively maintained by providing sufficient scope for landowners, employers and labourers to recognise their common interests. These common interests would be revealed by substituting God's natural laws of competition, contract and self-interest for the personal judgement of magistrates and overseers. God's natural laws would also

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<sup>51</sup> *Third Report*, p. 316.

<sup>52</sup> Okeden, *Letter*, p. 30.



replace the customary expectations of the poor and recreate an independent, industrious and moral labouring class.

The causal connection between an independent labouring class working in a free market for labour and the safety of society was a common feature in post-war poor law debates, in Dorset as elsewhere.<sup>53</sup> The urgency of promoting this connection became even more marked in the aftermath of the Swing Riots of 1830-31. The connection was trenchantly identified by the reverend Henry Walter as part of his campaign to reform poor relief in the county. Addressing Harry Farr Yeatman in 1833 on the issue of granting allowances to labourers, Walter first identified the common ground between them. He wrote:

I feel (just as you do) strongly that our magistrates ought to be not only respected, but loved by the people, and that it is essential to the peace and welfare of my country, that they should be looked up to by the peasantry as their friends.<sup>54</sup>

This common ground proved to be a very narrow terrain and as Walter continued his address the gulf between his position and Yeatman's began to quickly widen. He continued:

If the magistrate's allowances come up to their wishes, he is held to have conferred no obligations; for he tells them that his order is what the law makes it his duty to grant, and to enforce, and they believe him. But if the magistrate either makes no order for a complainant's relief, or an order to an unsatisfactory amount, he is considered as refusing the poor man justice; and is hated as an oppressor. And if the allowance be indeed insufficient the

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<sup>53</sup> Chapter six.

<sup>54</sup> H. Walter, *A Letter*, p. 8.

pauper, under a make-up-pay system, is truly in a desperate situation. For it matters not to toil harder, nor longer, nor to do his work in such a way as shall give satisfaction to his employer; because every sixpence the labourer thus adds to his acknowledged earnings, must be taken off the sum paid him by the overseers; and that too, as he knows, by your orders.<sup>55</sup>

As a consequence, Walter continued, magistrates' interventions not only lost them the 'love' of the labouring poor it also threatened the stability of Dorset society. Continuing to subsidise labourers' wages and keeping allowances closely bordering on the insufficient had the effect of demoralising the poor and making them dangerous. As Walter warned Yeatman, to judge the merit of the labourers' needs on the basis of a desire to be loved and respected was to 'tempt them to turn upon you, when the correction of the evil is beyond your reach, and to lay all their misery at your door'.<sup>56</sup> Walter also predicted dire consequences to the magistracy from continuing to intervene in the parish to manage wages by poor relief. In an open letter to Yeatman, he argued:

If I did not well know that as you mean the people no injury by your make-up pay system, so they will like you the better for defending it; whilst the unpopularity of resisting, what seems kind to them, must be mine. And yet, unless either argument or authority compel you to take a different course, before it is too late, I can have no doubt whatever but that your present one cannot be pursued much longer without bringing upon the magistracy such a tremendous load of unpopularity as no man can stand up against.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



The terms of Walter's argument broadly accord with the evangelical gloss Okeden had added to political economy. This gloss revealed the divine truth hidden between the lines of *The Wealth of Nations*. That divine truth required the poor to choose the earthly path to independence and morality. Walter's apocalyptic arguments against the poor laws were conducted more directly in terms of contingent gentry choices opposed to determinative natural laws. He sought to shift the debate on poverty and ideas of improvement from the terrain of politics and gentry choice to that of nature via the divine truth hidden between the lines of *An Essay on the Principles of Population*. Walter's reference to the compulsion of 'Argument or authority' reminds us that the reverend Thomas R. Malthus also argued that human law could not gainsay those natural laws ordained by God's providence.

We have seen how the self-identity of the gentry as patriarchs responsible to increase the wealth and maintain the security of the county, constituted the burdens of the poor as a category of political government and not a theoretical conception of the economy. Although this discourse sought to identify and create the poor as valued resources, it did so not to create a class of independent petty producers but to increase the numbers and subsistence of the poor and thereby improve Dorset agriculture and society. Ideas of the burdens of the poor were nevertheless consonant with improving agriculture, market orientated farming and societal improvement.<sup>58</sup> After all, the development of agrarian capitalism, managed by an enlightened gentry, was Adam Smith's last best hope for the improvement of the poor and of society in general. As Nicholas Philipson has written: 'Smith pinned what hopes he had for the survival of a free society upon the intelligent and

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<sup>58</sup> Chapter six.



commercially minded gentry who lived at a distance from London.’<sup>59</sup> This was exactly the political and cultural terrain on which the gentry constructed their identities of themselves.<sup>60</sup> However, the gentry’s moral intent was incompatible with the nature of the markets they were helping to construct in Dorset. In particular the seasonal market for waged labour which had been constructed from their wrecking the older customary economies in Dorset which gave the poor access to land and thus independence. As Keith Snell has shown, the enclosures of the commons and common lands created an increasingly seasonal demand for labour in Dorset from about 1700 and the consequent competition for employment was exploited to drive down wage levels.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, the gentry’s moral intent to choose to ameliorate the condition of the poor continued to find expression in the political and patriarchal terms of the burdens of the poor. However, the consequences for intellectual and political thought in Britain of the French Revolution effectively destroyed the political terrain on which the gentry had built the idea that society could be improved at their choice. In the twenty years after the French Revolution, a new orthodoxy with respect to the discourse of the burdens of the poor was constructed. It redefined the terms of poverty and the ideas of improvement. As Poynter notes, this new ‘orthodox view of poverty was Burke’s as refined and extended by Malthus’.<sup>62</sup> It would be Malthus who shifted the debate over poverty and the poor from the terrain of politics and gentry choice to that of nature.

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<sup>59</sup> N. Philipson, ‘Adam Smith as Civic Moralist’ in I. Hont and M. Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 197.

<sup>60</sup> Chapter three.

<sup>61</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor. Social Change and Agrarian England 1600-1900* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 150-1, 375-7, 380, 384-6, 392, 406-7, 410.

<sup>62</sup> J.R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795-1834* (1969), p. xv.



Historians have shown that Malthus' *An Essay on the Principles of Population* occupied a position second only to *The Wealth of Nations* in shaping the way that people viewed the world. The *Essay* was, as Bernard Semmel puts it, 'the most significant and most widely read work in political economy to appear in the quarter-century after the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*'.<sup>63</sup> J.R. Poynter concurs: 'the *Essay* was second only to *The Wealth of Nations* as a formative influence on that school of economics loosely called classical'.<sup>64</sup> Patricia James portrays Malthus as the legitimate successor to Smith and claims that during the first decade of the nineteenth century, 'Adam Smith's mantle had fallen upon [Malthus] he was regarded as the country's foremost living political economist'. James goes on to note that the currency of the word 'Malthusian' at this time 'could be compared with the word "Freudian" about a century later',<sup>65</sup> a view which is echoed by Robert Young, who notes that 'Malthus' ideas were as commonplace in the first half of the nineteenth century as Freud's were in the twentieth.'<sup>66</sup>

The influence of Malthus on theories of political economy has been much debated by historians and it is not the purpose of this case-history to rehearse their arguments. This chapter is interested in his impact in shifting attention to the issues of human nature and choice in order to argue against the perfectibility of man. Malthus articulated the gentry's hostility to the principles of the French Revolution - that 'bankrupt firm of impudent invention', as George Bankes put it.<sup>67</sup> Malthus

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<sup>63</sup> B. Semmel, 'Malthus: "Physiocracy" and the Commercial System' in J.C. Wood (ed.) *Thomas Robert Malthus: Critical Assessments* (4 vols, 1969) vol. 4, p. 116.

<sup>64</sup> Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, p. 237.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in, D. McNally, *Against the Market. Political Economy, Market Socialism and the Marxist Critique* (1993), p. 87.

<sup>66</sup> R.M. Young, 'Malthus and the Evolutionists: The Common Context of Biological and Social Theory', *P&P.*, 43 (1969), p. 119.

<sup>67</sup> *Hansard* (New Series), vol. 4 (1821), p. 38.



maintained that the gentry's belief that they could sustain the rural hierarchy by choosing to maintain the poor's right to subsistence was incompatible with fundamental laws of providence. He claimed that his argument was:

conclusive, not only against the perfectibility of man...but against any very marked and striking changes for the better, in the form and structure of general society; by which I mean any great and decided amelioration of the condition of the lower classes of mankind.<sup>68</sup>

Malthus drew this conclusion from his law of population. It is important to recall, however, that the principle of population did not assert that population increased geometrically while the production of food increased only arithmetically. Malthus asserted only that there was a capacity for the increase of the former to outstrip the production of the latter. The law of population thus 'constantly tends to subject the lower classes of the society to distress and to prevent any great amelioration of their condition'.<sup>69</sup> At the heart of Malthus' ideas on human nature was a theodicy which removed from the gentry the element of choice for maintaining and regulating the subsistence of the poor. 'God is constantly occupied in forming mind out of matter', and this, says Malthus, requires hunger and starvation to compel a naturally idle humankind to work for their subsistence. Therefore God devised the law of population in order that industry, reason and moral behaviour might develop.<sup>70</sup> To conform to God's laws for his creation was now a matter of individual responsibility. The poor must choose for themselves to regulate their behaviour in order to secure their subsistence. And by behaviour Malthus meant moral

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<sup>68</sup> A. Flew (ed.), *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1970), p. 172.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 205, 210.



behaviour: choosing to postpone marriage until their economic condition was adequate to support a family. This choice could not be assumed by the gentry but would be regulated by God's law of population which:

offers the natural rewards of good conduct, and inspires widely and generally the hopes of rising and fears of falling in society (and) is unquestionably the best calculated to develop the energies and faculties of man, and the best suited to the exercise and improvement of human virtue.<sup>71</sup>

It was precisely the poor law's corruption of the 'energies and faculties of man' that poor law reformers sought to challenge in order to demonstrate 'the natural rewards of good conduct'. And this chapter will conclude with an examination of the campaign against allowances to able-bodied married men in Dorset. It will begin by asking whether there was a distinct strategy to the campaign and, if so, what was its nature? This question will be answered by analysing Assistant Poor Law Commissioner David Parry Okeden's plan of poor law reform which appeared in the Royal Commission's report.<sup>72</sup> This particular text is chosen for two reasons. First, the Okeden plan of reform was constructed from extensive consultations with other Dorset magistrates, it therefore represented the views of the reforming magistrates on the Dorset Commission of the Peace and can be considered as an authoritative statement of what they believed were sound principles of administration.<sup>73</sup> Second, the authoritative nature of the plan suggests that it can be used as a template against which the blind repressive disciplines enshrined in the

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<sup>71</sup> T.R. Malthus, 'Essays' in *The Works of Thomas Robert Malthus*, (eds) E.A. Wrigley and D Souden (1986) vol. 3, p. 342.

<sup>72</sup> *Third Report*, pp. 319-321.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

Poor Law Amendment Act can be compared. Support for Okeden's plan of reform is also the measure of opposition to aspects of the New Poor Law.

Okeden, like many of his reforming contemporaries, proposed to end the system of paying allowances to able-bodied men in the employ of individuals, not to end completely the poor's rights to public relief. This discovery of ends, however, does not take us very far forward and does not provide any basis for comparing and differentiating Okeden from some of his contemporaries. To be able to use his plan as a template requires that we explore the means by which he sought this reform. We need, therefore, to put very different questions to his plan for reform: what were the other ends of his reformed system of relief practice and by what means were they to be secured? Answers to these questions will reveal a distinct reform strategy and the premises upon which it was based.

The report and plan of reform was more than a subtle analysis of the 'evils' of the unreformed system; it was also a general defence of public relief which argued that poor policy must respect particular principles. Okeden's plan was a clear rejection of the strategy of blind, repressive discipline enshrined in the New Poor Law which sought principally to reduce able-bodied male pauperism. It did not attempt to affect just the behaviour of actual or potential claimants for relief. It aimed at nothing less than affecting the behaviour of the whole population of Dorset.

Okeden's plan of reform was expressed negatively and positively. The text denied that the plan was founded 'on any speculative notions with respect to the management of the poor, or to their relief'.<sup>74</sup> And Okeden was careful to associate his reforms, which were clearly a break with the past, with best practice elsewhere in

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.



the county. His principal exemplar was the management of poor relief in the borough of Poole which had effected great savings to the ratepayers and, allegedly, wrought great changes to the vicious habits of the poor.<sup>75</sup> At first sight this negative/positive polarity might appear to be a matter of literary style only. But it perfectly accords with the condition of unchangeable constancy inscribed within the identity of Dorset. This condition was the gentry and their intense local and social attachments formed in the past.<sup>76</sup> He did identify the necessity of ceding overall authority to supervise poor relief to a central body of Commissioners in London but this radical proposition was justified in terms of continuity as a rational extension of existing practice in Dorset.<sup>77</sup>

The plan accords almost perfectly with the terms of the self-identities of the Dorset gentry. The motivating principle underpinning Okeden's plan was stated by him in the opening sentence of his plan of reform:

The object of this Plan and Arrangement is not founded on any *speculative notions*...but to establish, with *uniformity and precision*, a mode of Registration and of keeping the Accounts of Overseers, in every parish and place.<sup>78</sup>

No 'speculative notions' but 'uniformity and precision' - these terms forcibly bring to mind the terms of gentry identity in *The Broad Stone of Honour*. A gentleman rejected all contingent behaviour and conducted himself at all times in accordance to the uniform rules of a 'general plan for life'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 305-07.

<sup>76</sup> Chapter four.

<sup>77</sup> *Third Report*, pp. 304, 318.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>79</sup> Chapter three.

An independent central authority was a vital element in his plan of reform. It would have been anathema to many magistrates, however, particularly since central authority had been gradually encroaching on the government of rural society. This may explain why he took pains to carefully identify the rest of his proposals with existing statute law and best practice in Dorset. This Burkean appeal to history and tradition may have been designed to ensure the support of Tory magistrates like Harry Farr Yeatman. It certainly placed the issue of a reformed system of poor relief squarely in the terms which accorded with a gentry-constructed identity of Dorset as a unitary political/geographical whole governed by rational rules.<sup>80</sup>

Okeden's *Report* identified a trinity of causes of the mismanagement of poor relief: the 'narrow minded policy' of the farmers, the 'mistaken charity' of the magistracy and the 'eager cupidity' of the poor.<sup>81</sup> The text explicitly and implicitly denied that the poor alone were responsible for their 'enslavement'. It emphasised instead that they had been 'tempted' into improvidence by the Scale system and forced by misapplication of poor relief to abandon the sturdy independence that had prevailed amongst their forefathers. As a result, he said, 'The change of character and the habits in the labourer has been by this Scale system completely changed'.<sup>82</sup> Okeden described in some detail the changes to the character of the poor occasioned by their temptation. Industry declined, drunkenness and immorality increased, in particular sexual incontinence was rife. As a consequence the poor were forced to enter into early improvident marriages, or produce children outside of marriage. Worst of all,

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<sup>80</sup> Chapters two and five.

<sup>81</sup> *Third Report*, p. 314.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*



fathers and brothers had children by their daughters and sisters.<sup>83</sup> Okeden told the Commissioners, 'These tempters, with their scale, have much to answer for.'<sup>84</sup>

The plan of reform carefully specified the means by which an educative end could be attained. First, the imposition of uniform regulations drawn from existing laws and best practice, in order- to establish 'with uniformity and precision, a mode of Registration, and of keeping the accounts of Overseers, in every parish and place'.<sup>85</sup> Second, to extend knowledge of the character of the poor 'by the registration of every description of poor, classed under proper heads',<sup>86</sup> and finally, 'a real efficient audit of the parish accounts' to make public the costs of the management of the system. Making the public the uniform management and costs of the system would in turn be the guarantee of uniformity and knowledge.<sup>87</sup> The guarantee of uniformity was essential to the success of the reforms proposed by Okeden. As he informed the readers of his *Report*, 'The variety of practice is detrimental to the right operation of the Poor Laws, as it utterly precludes that uniformity of action, without which even the best system fails'.<sup>88</sup> Uniformity would be the key to the efficient operation of a reformed system of administration, and efficiency was one of the keys to moral regeneration. Uniformity of administration required that classification should have a much greater role than magisterial or parochial discretion. Therefore Okeden proposed an end to magisterial involvement in poor relief, in particular their appellate jurisdiction. This jurisdiction would be assumed by an elected parish authority and a Provincial Commissioner appointed by Government. 'To [the parish

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 303, 312, 313, 314.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 318, 321.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

authority] the pauper should make his first appeal: if they dismiss the case, it is closed', but 'if they send it on to the Provincial Commissioner, his decision on it should be final'.<sup>89</sup> The establishment of the Provincial Commissioner as an extra-county appellate authority was the final guarantee of uniformity. It is significant, however, that Okeden still allowed the parish authorities the discretion to refer all appeals to the Provincial Commissioner. This discretionary authority was tantamount to the authority which magistrates had enjoyed under the unreformed system of relief in Dorset. It may have been intended by Okeden as a sweetener to smooth the acceptance of the role of a distant central authority.

It was also necessary to introduce uniformity to open the labour market. The able-bodied working class would learn that relief was refused or granted according to the same principles whatever their individual circumstances and wherever they were applied. 'I hold this to be the basis on which any remedy for the evils of the Poor Laws must be founded', Okeden wrote. 'It is the preliminary step to the abolition of relief to the able-bodied, and silences a host of objectors.'<sup>90</sup> It may be argued that Okeden's gradual method of prohibiting relief to able-bodied men could have been achieved more certainly and immediately by an order for direct prohibition based on a self-acting test of destitution. The 1834 reforms instituted this much more direct route and excluded magistrates and imposed a uniform system. However, Okeden's plan was consonant with the terms of the gentry's self-identities and the identities they had constructed of Dorset and the parish. The self-appointed role of the gentry was to govern in a rational disinterested manner by reference to traditional values and in the interests of the whole of rural society. Okeden's plan of reform would

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.



demonstrate to rich and poor alike the innate fairness of his proposed system of poor relief by allowing every member of the parish to compare the treatment of every other member. The plan assured that all classes of society would reflect on their obligations and their rights because, crucially, it took account of those not receiving poor relief. It was therefore an ambitious attempt to re-educate and thus remoralise the whole of Dorset rural society.

Okeden's ambitious project depended on managing the reformed system of poor relief to achieve a minute knowledge of the poor and to ensure that this knowledge would be made transparent. The text admitted that the object of relief practice was to foster habits of providence and independence amongst the poor but acknowledged that this could only be obtained by requiring a similar providence and independence from the rest of rural society. This holistic emphasis on education and knowledge established an important difference between Okeden and the strategy of 1834. A reformed system of poor relief had therefore to re-educate the whole of rural society and there was no role for a blind repressive system of poor relief which would be brought to bear on the poor alone.

The management of a system of poor relief organised by the terms Okeden's of plan of reform offered the prospect of providing important lessons on political economy and morality which could be learned by the owners of capital every bit as much as by the labourers. Okeden clearly anticipated that such a reform would restore social harmony, although indirectly. His reformed system of administration was rather designed to remove immediately and directly the causes of conflict and self interest. This would give free play to natural economic laws from which the whole of rural society would be able to deduce correct moral ones. The profitability



of various measures to set the poor to work could now be measured by their degree of success in rendering the members of the poor morally as well as financially self-sustaining; in future, economic relations were therefore equated directly to moral relations. The terms of the burdens of the poor constructed by patriarchal oeconomy had little concern for the origins of work, whether it was provided through the poor rates or by individual farmers. The patriarchal steward calculated success in rendering the poor industrious and maintaining their latent capacity to increase wealth. The profitability of an allowance system could not be measured by an immediate financial return but rather by what it promised as a future return: the maintenance of an industrious population with a latent capacity to increase wealth. This narrative was fractured by evangelical theology which argued in its contest with political economy that voluntary charity was morally superior to compulsory poor rates. According to this narrative, the poor were impoverished and corrupted by the receipt of relief because allowances undermined their God given impulse to labour. Society as a whole also suffered because the granting of poor law allowances also destroyed competition and thereby profits. This intermixing of theodicy and economic theory allowed the gentry to argue that it was God's plan for His creation that monetary as well as moral profits could only be secured by removing all obstacles to a 'free' competition for labour. This was so because His 'natural' economic law determined that prices and profits always moved in the same direction. Thus when prices and profits fell, employment fell also and the competition for jobs drove down the price of labour. As a result of the reduction of the price of labour profit margins were restored and the demand for labour increased once more. The maintenance of this natural equilibrium guaranteed the equipoise of



rural society. Thus present and future monetary and moral rewards could only be accrued by allowing the free play of God's natural laws to maintain the competition for labour. Reduce the effectiveness of God's competitive pressure by the payment of poor relief and the moral basis of society was ultimately destroyed. The wealth of the poor is no longer their latent industry but their innate competitiveness. We now begin to see how the contest between evangelical theology and scientific political economy has resulted in the erosion of the substance of patriarchal oeconomy. The subsistence of the poor may no longer be guaranteed by the interventions of the gentry. Subsistence can be secured only by individual effort in a society where God's natural economic laws are given free reign.

This exploration of the relationship between political economy and paternalism suggests to me several refinements to the usual presentation of the governing purpose of the Dorset gentry. The gentry individually and collectively used the rhetoric of mutual obligation in the terms of stewardship, but the categories of poor constructed by political economy defined a more collectivist reality. As we have seen, the configuration of the poor laws in Dorset strongly suggests that the dependant poor increasingly came to be treated as a group, indeed were classified into groups, who shared a similar position rather than as individuals who had unique familial relationships with the patriarch.<sup>91</sup> Although the magistrates in Dorset could still act out some of the forms of patriarchy those forms were increasingly voided of their oeconomic substance by the inscription of the terms of paternalism's moral necessities. The substance of the emerging paternalist discourses did not require to be legitimated by face to face relationships. The paternalist discourse of obedience

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<sup>91</sup> Chapter six.

to God's natural laws and personal striving after moral perfection defined all subordinates in the relationship collectively; that is, all subordinates basically stood in the same relation to the paternalist. Paternalism had become part of an organisational rule system. Thus, without outside interference, the natural economic order would impose moral disciplines on social and economic relations. This narrative identified the moral duty of the rich and the poor as a positive responsibility not to tamper with the mechanisms of a natural order in which God himself did not intervene. The narrative of moral paternalism therefore constituted the identity of the old poor laws as the worst of all possible worlds. They were first a positive check to the moral reformation of the poor and second they interfered with the natural order of Divine Providence.<sup>92</sup>

When the gentry talked about reform of the poor laws and God's natural laws it was in the grand terms of ends and ultimate purposes. These were felt to lie in the full development of the moral potential of the individual by a process of trial and testing. Moral independence (which also encompassed economic independence) was a term that denoted the desired outcome of this process. The independent self that paternalism defined was not the independent workman who was a specialised commodity producer envisaged by Adam Smith. As McNally has argued, this definition constituted a network of equitable relationships between free and independent individuals.<sup>93</sup> This definition may be more properly associated with oeconomy's concept of society in which each individual stood in the same relationship to the patriarchal head of the household. The term independence as defined by the narrative of moral paternalism was based on the growing reality of a

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<sup>92</sup> Hilton, *Atonement*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>93</sup> McNally, *Against the Market*, p. 54.



tri-partite division of rural society into landlords, farmers and labourers. Where the majority of people did not own the means of production, Smith acknowledged that ‘the greater part of the workmen stand in need of a master’.<sup>94</sup> That master, as Okeden’s emphasis on the power of the reformed system of poor laws to re-educate rural society suggests, was the independent moral self. In the following chapter I want to move on to discuss how the independent self that paternalism defined was also liberated and internalised by education so that individuals controlled themselves rather than being controlled by others.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Gentry Identities and the Education of the Poor: Remoralising and revivifying Dorset society*

In what follows, I shall be pursuing a familiar story but from an unfamiliar direction. The familiar story is the establishment of Sunday schools and elementary education in the English countryside. It is the story of the attempt to impose a monolithic view of the world on the poor working class. This has been the framework of numerous national and local studies. For example, William Gibbs' work on the development of elementary education in nineteenth century Dorset; Pamela Horn's exploration of the role of landowners and the clergy in establishing rural schools in England; Richard Johnson's analysis of the relationship between educational policy and social control; Lawrence Stone's work on literacy and David Cressy's research into illiteracy in England.<sup>1</sup> It is not my intention to rehearse the trajectories of these issues in any great detail here. Instead this chapter will focus on the unfamiliar aspects of this story. These aspects include the process by which a suitable education of the poor was defined by the terms of the gentry's self-identities as the natural rulers of rural society. The issue of a suitable education included a debate on what the poor should learn to make them independent and industrious. Should they be given a liberal scientific education or should they be taught moral behaviour? This issue was informed by tensions between an older latitudinarian position on

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<sup>1</sup> W.F.E. Gibbs, 'The Development of Elementary Education in Dorset from the Early Nineteenth Century to 1870', (MA thesis, University of Southampton, 1960); P. Horn, *Education in Rural England 1800-1914* (1978); D. Cressy, 'Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730', *Hl.J.*, 20 (1977); R. Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in the Early Victorian Age', *P&P.*, 49 (1970); L. Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900', *P&P.*, 42 (1969).



natural philosophy and the newer Evangelical theology of revealed religion: could reason alone without scriptural authority provide evidence of the natural economic laws of God's Divine Providence? The issue of scriptural authority suggested a revitalised role for the Anglican clergy in educating the poor. But the practicalities of providing this education revealed the unfitness of the Church authorities to undertake this role. The gentry, by embarking on an ambitious program to remoralise Dorset society, also contributed to renewing the moral purposes of the Established Church.

Dorset was the larger part of the See of Bristol which also included the city of Bristol, and a handful of parishes in Devon adjacent to Dorset. This curious amalgam, with the head of the diocese severed from its heart in Dorset, continued in place until the reforms of 1837 amalgamated Dorset with the diocese of Salisbury. Bristol was one of the poorest Sees in England and Wales, and as late as 1835, for example, ranked only twenty-third of the twenty six Sees in terms of its net income of £2,121.<sup>2</sup> The poverty of the See and the distance of its diocesan throne from Dorset also acted to lessen Episcopal interest in the state of the Church in the county. Throughout the eighteenth century it was held in succession by Bishops who only accepted it as a necessary burden to be endured on the ladder of preferment to better things. Thomas Gooch, Bishop from 1737-38, stayed so short a time 'as never to have visited his diocese'.<sup>3</sup> Joseph Butler accepting the Bishopric in 1738 could not help remarking that it was 'not very suitable either to the condition of my future or the circumstances of my preferment, nor as I should have

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<sup>2</sup> G.F.A Best, *Temporal Pillars* (1964), p. 545.

<sup>3</sup> *The Victoria History of the County of Dorset*, 3 vols, (ed.) W. Page (1908), vol. 2., p. 42, (f.n.) 332.

thought to the recommendation with which I was honoured'.<sup>4</sup> And making a similar point Bishop Newton enumerated the various preferments he was called on to resign on his promotion to Bristol: 'the prebend of Westminster, the precentorship of York, the lectureship of St George', Hanover Square, and the genteel office of sub-almoner'.<sup>5</sup>

If the Church in Dorset lacked central direction, it also lacked religious and social authority amongst many of the poor. It was weakened and undermined by widespread lay patronage which tolerated absenteeism and encouraged pluralism.<sup>6</sup> There were 212 livings in Dorset during the period 1790-1835, and the percentage of pluralities never fell below 34 per cent. And in the decade 1820-29, there were as many as 104 plural livings in the county.<sup>7</sup>

The first returns to list Dorset churches separately from the rest of the Diocese of Bristol were produced in 1818. They clearly demonstrated the weakened condition of Church infrastructure and clergy. The returns highlight the high levels of absenteeism, pluralism and poverty and the dilapidated condition of some Church accommodation. Of the 217 livings in the county, twenty-seven had churches or chapels paying incumbents less than £150 a year and a further thirty-five paid less than £100. Sixty-five of the Glebe Houses were empty and their rectors resided outside of the parish while ninety-three churches could not accommodate all the population of the parish.<sup>8</sup> Clerical and lay neglect threatened more than the spiritual and moral well-being of the congregation. Absenteeism often rendered nugatory the

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<sup>4</sup> *DNB*, 21 vols, S. Lee (ed.) (1906), vol. 8, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> *Victoria History of Dorset*, vol. 2, p. 42, (f.n.) 332.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix D: Table D3.1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Table D13.1.

<sup>8</sup> *P.P.*, Account of Benefices and Population, Churches, Chapels and Their Capacities and Numbers and Condition of Glebe Houses (1818, XVIII), pp. 170-74.



collection of the church rate which in turn imperilled the fabric of the church itself, and the physical safety of those worshippers who chose to attend. The historian of the parish of Ashmore in Dorset tells us of some of the consequences of absenteeism:

It was found at three vestry meetings held in succession in 1801-02, that the rail of the church was dangerous to worshippers, the pulpit and altar rail were rotten, that the gallery, the steps into it and the seats both in the gallery and body of the church were in need of repair. The Holy Communion, it appeared, was celebrated three times a year - Christmas, Easter and Whit Sunday - till 1791, afterwards quarterly for a considerable number of years.<sup>9</sup>

Many churches were unable to rely on the Church rate as a source of income to support the activities of the church in the parish. In some parishes the level at which the rate was set had not altered in decades while in others no rate was set at all and the church was dependant on the private generosity of the patron. For instance, the church rate in Winterborne Kingston had been unaltered since 1758 and in eighteen other parishes no rate had ever been made. Even where a rate had been set, the churchwardens had found it impossible to collect from part or all of the parishioners in a further four parishes. In some parishes local sectarian conflict made it sometimes difficult to raise church rates to repair or refurbish dilapidated churches. For example, the campaign to secure agreement to build a new church in Allington, which began in 1822, was finally successful in 1828 but only at the price of alienating a numerous and politically powerful Dissenting section of the rate-paying community. As late as 1842, a debt of £700 incurred in building the church was still

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<sup>9</sup> E. Watson, *History of the Parish of Ashmore, 1651-1820* (Gloucester, 1890), p. 92.

outstanding, and the parish vestry was still refusing to allow any church rates to be levied to service it. And in 1845 another twenty five parishes in Dorset found it impossible, for one reason or another, to levy any church rates or to levy a rate sufficient for the needs of the parish. And from similar circumstances it was found 'impracticable' to enforce a church rate in Wareham.<sup>10</sup>

The capitalist ethos which celebrated the possession of private property as a source of profit and power applied also to the ownership of advowsons in Dorset. The purchase of an advowson was a means to exercise patronage, acquire status and was also a source of potential profit. It had been a matter of some debate whether or not advowsons were held by their patrons on trust for the church. Debating the issue in parliament 1802, it was finally and decisively accepted that advowsons were property. Dorset magistrate Sir William Scott defined the position thus: 'Though originally perhaps mere trusts, (advowsons) are now become lay fees...And they are not merely lay property in law, but a very large portion of them is so in fact'.<sup>11</sup> The evidence for this may be seen in the number of occasions advowsons changed hands in Dorset during this period.<sup>12</sup>

The frequent changes to ownership was one source of weakness to the Anglican church in Dorset. Treating church patronage as a species of property was another and both were potentially destructive of religious moral authority. Patronage and all encompassing concepts of property placed the church and its clergy on much the same basis as land or labour, or any other commodity that was bought and sold in the market place. Pluralism in turn helped raise the income and status of many

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<sup>10</sup> *P.P.*, S. C. on Church Rates (1845, XLI), pp. 106-13.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 235.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix D: Table D3.1.



clergymen to that enjoyed by the secular members of the ruling class. The Clergy as a body had also become gentlemen and the Church a source of income and a proper career for the sons of many of the Dorset gentry.<sup>13</sup> The rise in clerical incomes and status had resulted in some of the clergy being co-opted onto the Commission of the Peace from 1790 onwards, and many of them would come to dominate the activities of the Bench in their respective divisions.<sup>14</sup> As Obelkevetch has noted, by gentrifying the church and helping to raise the secular status of the clergy, the lay patrons would unwittingly contribute to clerical absenteeism and reduce rather than increase their religious influence.<sup>15</sup> For example, according to the Bishop of Bristol, in 1826, Dorset's churches were noted for their lack of sermons and lectures. Nor had the situation improved greatly during the next twenty five years. In 1854, for example, Ash Wednesday was still disregarded in 112 churches and chapels in the county, and in 133 the Feast of the Lord's Ascension was still not kept.<sup>16</sup>

The Established Church in Dorset had neither developed with the times to counteract the revival and spread of Dissent, nor indeed to accommodate itself to any increase in religious demands within its own Anglican communities. Church building and restoration in Dorset did not get fully underway until the late eighteenth-thirties, despite the availability of central funds for such purposes.<sup>17</sup> Septimus Smith, the Deputy Registrar to the Bishop of Bristol, reported in 1832 that no official application had been made to the See for the Bishop's assent to the building of any additional church or chapel, or to the purchase of any building for that

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Chapter two.

<sup>15</sup> J. Obelkevetch, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832-68* (Oxford, 1977), p. 177.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in *Victorian History of Dorset*, vol. 2, p. 44, (f.n.) 351.

<sup>17</sup> George. IV, c. 103.



purpose.<sup>18</sup> This represented the gentry's well-founded disillusion with the See of Bristol which was regarded by many of them as laggardly and dilatory in its Episcopal management of the Established Church in Dorset.<sup>19</sup> It may also indicate an unwarranted consequence of the gentry's self-identities as the only rightful rulers of rural society and the intense social and local attachments they had constructed. Generally, the lay owners of advowsons in the county resisted the financial inducements offered by central government to rebuild churches in favour of raising subscriptions locally. As a result only nine churches and seven chapels were built, rebuilt or enlarged in the twenty years between 1817 and 1836.<sup>20</sup> A rebuilding program did not get fully underway until the period 1837-1845 when a further twenty churches and chapels were built or refurbished.<sup>21</sup>

The Established Church in Dorset was not well placed as an instrument to help the gentry instruct the poor and remoralise Dorset society. Some of the gentry therefore established their own Sunday schools or supported the role of other religious societies to educate the poor. In 1786, William Morton Pitt, together with the clerical magistrates Morgan Jones, George Tito Brice, John Richards and John Morton Colson, established a branch of the Sunday School Society in the Purbeck district of the Blandford South petty session division. By 1792, schools had opened in thirteen parishes providing religious instruction for 1,411 poor children.<sup>22</sup> Pitt made no bones about his reasons for establishing the schools. It was necessary to have the poor subjected to 'the frequency of divine service, and the catechizing of

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<sup>18</sup> *P.P.*, Charges and Expenses of the Commissioners for Building New Churches (1831-32, XXX), p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Gibb, 'The Development of Elementary Education in Dorset', p. 63.

<sup>20</sup> *P.P.*, Accounts and Papers, Church Building Materials (1837-38, XXXVIII), pp. 141-50.

<sup>21</sup> *P.P.*, Accounts and Papers, Church Building Materials (1845, XXVIII), pp. 261-78.

<sup>22</sup> Hutchins, *History*, vol. 1, p. 549.



[their] children', in order to counteract the 'lawlessness' in the Purbeck district and to 'pacify' the poor.<sup>23</sup> This first organised attempt to evangelise the poor was followed in 1804 by the establishment of auxiliary branches of The British and Foreign Bible Society (The Bible Society) in Dorset under the patronage of Lord Digby. The Bible Society did not impose a test of religious principles and admission was open to all who would subscribe. During the following seven years branches were formed in eight of the nine places which held petty or quarter sessions in the county and also in the towns of Lyme Regis and Poole.<sup>24</sup>

The Bible Society had positive views of the capacity of the poor to derive for themselves correct moral principles from the Bible. The establishment of the Society in Dorset may have also been a response to the absence of a county wide system of Sunday schools by which the resident clergy were able to catechise the poor. In one sense, the Bible Society operated in opposition to the much older Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SPCK), believing that it was more important to the moral well being of the poor, and ultimately to the stability of society, that Bibles should be distributed to the homes of all who wished one. In contrast, the SPCK was firmly sectarian and opposed the idea that the poor should derive their own spiritual and moral meanings from unannotated Bibles in their homes. The SPCK, however, did not gain a foothold in the county until 1815 and by 1833 had established only two Sunday schools in the county.<sup>25</sup> The issues of sectarianism and whether or not the poor could be trusted to moralise themselves,

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<sup>23</sup> D.R.O. PE/COC/1N/12. Letter, William Morton Pitt to John Calcraft, 30 June 1786.

<sup>24</sup> W. Canton, *History of The British and Foreign Bible Society*, 5 vols (1904), vol. 1, Appendix 2. The places were Blandford, Bridport, Cerne Abbas, Dorchester, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Wareham and Weymouth.

<sup>25</sup> D.R.O., PE/SH/AO1/1: M.S. Minutes of the Sherborne District Committee of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, 30 April 1821; 22 February 1836.



exemplify the division within the gentry on the wider issue of a suitable education for the poor. Harry Farr Yeatman rehearsed these divisions in the columns of the *Dorset County Chronicle*. In July 1825 he advertised his intention to establish a branch of the pro-evangelical Portesian Bible Society in Dorset. The society aimed to produce an annotated bible or an index to the Bible as a means of elucidating its spiritual and moral meaning. Yeatman was already a member of the SPCK but entertained reservations about the rival Bible Society. He was unable to join the latter when it had been first established in Dorset because he felt that the Bible:

without more comment, or explanation, either by arrangement or analysis, was unintelligible to the lower and illiterate orders of mankind - that it led to error and ignorance and frequently to a division which Christian teachers had been ordered by St Paul to avoid.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, the Bible Society was seen as an unwitting device to undermine the Established Church. As one anonymous Dorset pamphleteer put it:

At the same time, the unhappy division among brethren of the same household of faith, which the plausible association [Bible Society] in question has produced, must tend, in a great degree, to destroy that unity of sentiment and combination of professional energy, which alone can counteract the undermining process now carrying on against our envied establishment. So far then from lessening the evils of dissent...this boasted scheme of comprehension...appears to my mind, more likely to prove a powerful specific for the multiplication of heresies and schisms.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *D.C.C.*, 4 July 1825.

<sup>27</sup> *D.R.O.*, PE/SH/AL2/20: H. Walter, BD, FRS, *A Second Letter to the Lord Bishop of Peterborough on the independence of the Authorised Version of the Bible* (1828), p. 7.



The establishment of Sunday schools and branches of the various national societies provides evidence of the gentry's common concerns with the moral lives of the poor. But these schools and societies also provide evidence of the gentry's different approaches to inculcating the poor with appropriate patterns of behaviour. The issue for the Dorset gentry was how to create a unity of sentiment and combination of professional energy in the face of their internal divisions, a decayed church infrastructure and the encroachments of dissent. For example, by 1820, 118 of Dorset's 283 places and parishes contained licensed dissenting chapels or were part of Wesleyan Methodist and Primitive Methodist preaching circuits.<sup>28</sup> The issue of resisting the encroachments of dissent was discussed at length by William Morton Pitt in a letter to Earl Ilchester written in 1815. Pitt described how, when the first District Committee of the Bible Association was put in place, many of the clergy and laity in Dorset raised considerable apprehensions on the dangers to the Established Church of an Association which allowed dissenters a role in reconstructing the moral and spiritual life of the county. Indeed, the formation of a branch of the SPCK in 1815 had been a response to a perceived threat to the Church of England. William Morton Pitt's solution to the wrangling between the local associations of the Bible Society and the SPCK was to secure Ilchester's appointment to chair both associations. In this way Ilchester was able to use his influence and patronage to mediate the tensions between the two associations.<sup>29</sup>

The apparent danger to the Established Church of non-sectarian religious education was made the more real by the introduction in 1811 of schooling based on the model

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<sup>28</sup> Appendix D: Table D2.1.

<sup>29</sup> D.R.O., Fox-Strangways (Ilchester) Archive, uncatalogued box 242. Letter, William Morton Pitt to Earl Ilchester, 27 September 1815.



of the Royal Lancastrian Society which had been founded in 1808. The principles of the Lancastrian System of education were particularly attractive to Dissenters in Dorset but the schools also attracted large numbers of children whose religious affiliations were at least nominally those of the Established Church. Contemporary observers ascribed the initial successes of Lancaster's system to the nature of dissent. Joseph Fox, for example, alleged that, 'The circumstances of his being a Quaker was that which most directly contributed to his success. Sectarians have more zeal than the members of the Established church.'<sup>30</sup> However correct this analysis, and it seems more likely that Lancaster's system enjoyed initial success in Dorset by virtue of being the first attempt to institute a system of education that was both cheap and apparently effective, Fox's observation was clearly an implied rebuke to the lack of zeal amongst the clergy of the Established Church. The response from the Dorset ruling class and their allies amongst the clergy was swift and a county branch of the National School was formed in 1812. The National School Society was created in 1811 in opposition to the Lancastrian System. In its own words it was formed:

With the sole object in view being to communicate to the poor generally by a summary mode of education, lately brought into practice, such knowledge and habits, as are sufficient to guide them through life, in their proper stations, especially to teach the doctrines of religion according to the principles of the Established Church, and to train them to the performance of their religious duties to early discipline.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> J. Fox, 'A Comparative View of the Plans of Education as Detailed in the Publications of Dr Bell and Mr Lancaster, and Remarks on Dr Bell's Madras School, and Hints to the Managers and Committees of Charity and Sunday Schools, on the Practicability of Extending such Institutions upon Mr Lancaster's Plan', *Quarterly Review*, 11 (1811), p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Anon., *First Annual Report of the National Society* (1812), p. 18.



The establishment of the County Society directed from Dorchester and independent from the Diocesan Society in Bristol reflected more than the physical distance of Dorset from the Episcopal See. It also demonstrated the reluctance of the gentry who sponsored the formation of the National Society to be managed by a diocesan authority that had proved uninterested and ineffectual in managing its own affairs within the county. Even after Dorset had been annexed to the See of Salisbury in 1837, its county branch of the National Society remained aloof from the Diocesan Board of Education although it entered into informal agreements to work closely with the Board.<sup>32</sup> The County Society also rejected the opportunity to enter into union with the parent society in London. Affiliation to the parent society meant each school had access to central funds. The decision whether or not to affiliate was ostensibly left in the hands of individuals but in practice the decision was taken by the patron that financed each school. Gibbs has argued that the refusal to affiliate probably reflected a general resistance to external authority amongst the Dorset gentry and clergy.<sup>33</sup> This is a plausible explanation and certainly agrees with the evidence of funding church building and extension in Dorset. This evidence strongly suggests that the gentry were quite prepared to forgo central funds and to spend their own money in order to retain freedom of independent action. This is not the only explanation, however, and there is another, more persuasive explanation of the decision not to affiliate. Affiliating to the parent society, and receiving aid from central funds, entailed accepting certain obligations. Chief amongst these was the obligation to admit only children who had been baptised and to provide instruction in the doctrines of the Established Church. Dissenters generally were ambivalent to

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<sup>32</sup> Gibbs, 'The Development of Elementary Education', p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.



their children receiving instruction in the doctrines of the Established Church. The future long-term advantages conferred by education on their children outweighed any short-term disadvantages of the format in which that education was partly delivered. Dissenters, however, objected violently to baptism and the decision to forgo national union at the foundation of the county society in 1812 was more likely to have been taken from tactical considerations. The evidence suggests that dissent was making further encroachments in the lives of the poor.<sup>34</sup> As we have seen, for a variety of reasons the Anglican Church in Dorset was not well placed to resist such encroachments or to propagate the sorts of moral orthodoxy and theology that would have explained this crisis in terms of providential theology. Schools would fill the gap left by a weakened Church and be responsible for remoralising the poor. It was important, therefore, not to alienate a significant minority of adult Dorset society at a time of crisis by establishing an overtly sectarian system of education.

The decision whether or not to establish a National School was left in the hands of the majority of ratepayers. This exercise in local democracy prefigured the gentry's later attempts to release what some contemporaries described as the vital reforming energy of the 'general will'.<sup>35</sup> It attracted much initial criticism from some of the parish clergy who resented what they saw as an affront to their status. The effective day to day management of the schools was in the hands of the district secretaries in the nine local branches situated in each of the petty session divisions. Eight of the local branches were managed from the same towns in which petty session were convened. The exception was the Bridport petty session division which was

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<sup>34</sup> Appendix D: Table D2.1.

<sup>35</sup> Chapter five.



managed locally from the town of Beaminster.<sup>36</sup> This probably reflected the numbers and political power of Dissenters in Bridport and the resistance of its principle inhabitants to sponsor and support the sectarian principles on which the National Society had been founded.

The historians of the National Society have argued that its founding should be seen as a continuation of Anglican clerical involvement in establishing parish schools which began in the late eighteenth century. They have also asserted that despite its own sectarian constitution the aims of the Society went wider than a simple riposte to Dissenters.<sup>37</sup> If we can agree that the Society was not founded as a simple riposte to Dissent it is because the historical context of the clergy's involvement in parish education suggests that the Society, at least as it appeared in Dorset, was a complex response to what Lancaster's system of education represented to the ruling class. To many contemporaries it represented a mode of reasoning which, as the Bishop of Bristol put it to the Dorset clergy, appealed to the head over the heart. The monitorial system of education employed by the National Schools, just like Lancaster's system, emphasised punishment and rewards. This emphasis was premised on an assumption that the best disciplined, the most informed and the most hardworking of the poor naturally displaced the ignorant, lazy and feckless. Here then are the terms of moral paternalism which identified life as an ethical obstacle course and defined all relationships as moral relationships. But this very visible curriculum also expressed the economic benefits of education in an equation of pain or pleasure which closely resembled the terms of rational utilitarianism. Here is the

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<sup>36</sup> Anon., *Account of the Proceedings of the Dorset Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church* (Dorchester, 1813), p. 14.

<sup>37</sup> H.J. Burgess and P.A. Welsby, *A Short History of the National Society 1811-1961* (1963), p. 3.

crux of the problem facing the Dorset gentry: on what terms would the poor be taught to be moral, obedient and productive? The rational terms of utilitarian discourses and Dissenting theologies which seemed to suggest that men were mere reasoning machines; or the terms of Christian scriptural authority that revealed God's purposes for His Providence?

The gentry were divided on the issue of education. If most could broadly agree that the Established Church and scripture should have the major role to play in educating the poor to adopt independent moral lives, there were, as we have seen, deep differences as to what should form the basis of the justification of landed power. Education had a twofold purpose: to instruct the poor in the doctrines of the Established Church and reveal God's Divine purpose for humankind. In this way the poor would learn that in their mortal lives they would have to endure inevitable trials and tests in order to fit them for life everlasting. Education was also the means to discipline children to work consistently and conscientiously. An anonymous commentator, writing in 1829 under the pseudonym Dilettante in the *Dorset County Chronicle*, informed readers:

We should discipline ourselves to a course of industry and virtue, and shun indulgences of idleness and vice as the greatest dangers. It is not because children are taught to read and write at the charity schools, that those establishments are so beneficial to a state; but because "they train up the child in the way he should go", and, consequently, obviate his progress in a wrong direction.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> D.C.C., 16 July 1829.



The emphasis on self-discipline and self denial was approved but also qualified by men who supported the notion that the poor could also be trained up in the proper way to go by means of what the unbeneficed Dorset clergyman and polymath William Barnes defined as a liberal education. Barnes did not conceive that morality and scientific education were mutually exclusive, he did not believe in a division between the head and the heart. Neither did he believe that education should be only narrowly utilitarian, to fit men and women only to perform their trade or handicraft. Looking back on the consequences of a quarter of a century of such teaching in Dorset he wrote:

If bare craft-teaching, as it is distinguished from a liberal or generous education, is the worthiest, then our poor dark-minded clowns are well educated; since they are often sent to the plough, and so to their craft learning, without any waste of time in the winning of a knowledge of God, or of any of the vast stores of science, which He has given us through the more enlightened minds of the learned.<sup>39</sup>

Barnes' idea of a liberal education was based in a belief that a man's knowledge should extend further than his own trade. He was a staunch supporter of Mechanics Institutes 'with their lectures to carpenters on geology, to blacksmiths on botany, to tailors on chemistry, and to printers on astronomy'.<sup>40</sup> Barnes' concept of a liberal education had more in common with Dugald Reid's theories of imitative behaviour than Locke's belief that men and women could reason on their experiences. It was not, however, the sort of liberal education advocated by the radical Richard Hassall. The son of a Cerne Abbas carter, who was sent to his craft as a printer but had

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<sup>39</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1841, pp. 22-24.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

acquired for himself a 'vast store of science'. Writing in the *The Republican* he argued that the poor should be educated: 'to know the sovereignty of the people, and to preserve amongst themselves, for their consumption, the substance produced by their labour'.<sup>41</sup> Hassall saw education as the device to liberate the poor from the political and economic oppression of the ruling class and his advocacy of teaching the labour theory of value was one means to bring that liberation about. And it was the fear of this sort of liberation that preoccupied the ruling class. They favoured education because it promoted morality amongst the poor by inculcating habits of obedience and punctuality. But they feared the poor learning to reason on their own existence. Barnes' mild suggestions for a liberal education to bring the poor to God were fiercely resisted. The ideal education was one which promoted efficiency and morality. If there was broad agreement that the ultimate aims of education were to discipline the poor for moral and productive lives then the means to achieve those aims were areas of contest.

The gentry conceived the contest between reason and revelation in terms of a moral crisis which threatened to undermine the foundations on which the social order had been built. In terms of political freedoms it threatened the destruction of the Glorious Revolution and all that had flowed from the Settlement of 1688 that were seen as the guarantees of the security of landed property. To resist the encroachments of Dissent was politically and constitutionally advantageous. The belief that the doctrines of the Church were the oil that maintained the well ordered interactions of society was common to many men. For example, in the year following the founding of the Royal Lancastrian Society, Henry Bankes addressed

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<sup>41</sup> *The Republican*, 11 August 1826.



the House of Commons on the nature of the moral crisis, in particular the threat posed by resurgent Dissent to an Established Church. He argued that:

to support the church, was an affirmation and celebration of morality itself.

Without that affirmation, without a public confirmation of the value of Christian doctrines and morality the mainsprings of social order would cease to regulate effectively the social order.<sup>42</sup>

But as Bankes' remarks indicate, the resistance to Dissent went far beyond the narrow political concerns of the Constitutional Settlement of 1688. It was also an affirmation and celebration of Christian morality which was the wellspring of a well ordered society. And morality was best defined and nourished by the doctrines of the Established Church because the Established Church and true Christian morality were one in the same.

Bankes' blunt refusal to countenance any accommodation with Dissent draws our attention once more to contemporary gentry concepts of human nature, particularly their concerns with the character of the poor.<sup>43</sup> These concerns were expressed by Archdeacon Charles Daubeney in *The Pamphleteer* which published in 1815 his 'The Substance of a Discourse' as an argument against co-operation with Dissent. Daubeney wrote:

Man from his natural propensity, is an imitative being. A circumstance which at all times must render it a matter of primary importance with whom he associates, and into what connection he enters. Hence the conclusion is, that by an injudicious association, principles, not less than manners are liable to be corrupted. A consideration which ought to lead to general

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<sup>42</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 13 (1809), p. 277.

<sup>43</sup> Chapters three and seven.

caution: whilst to determine the application of such caution to the particular case or subject in question, should be the exclusive province of sound judgement and discretion.<sup>44</sup>

The Discourse employed the common place of many sermons in its characterisation of the corruptibility of human nature from ‘injudicious association’. It also implied that only the gentry were fit to decide on what were suitable manners and principles for the poor. As we have seen elsewhere, these were the commonplace terms of the gentry’s self-defined identities as the natural rulers of rural society. The argument that man ‘from his natural propensity, is an imitative being’ was a direct rejection of Locke’s notion that men and women learn by reasoning on their existence. The idea of ‘imitation’ belongs to Dugald Reid’s theory that humankind learns in a direct and unmediated fashion from their experience.

History offered the gentry choices on how the poor were to learn. In the Enlightenment, rationalist philosophers from Descartes onwards began to claim that the power of reason could in principle know the truth as clearly and distinctly as God knows it. The dream of totalising human knowledge begins to be linked with the ideas of progress, and the ultimate liberation of humanity. The belief was that humankind as a whole could evolve towards divinity by endlessly increasing its own knowledge and improving its social arrangements. The new found confidence in the ability of human reason alone to provide an understanding of the world and a guide for human conduct increasingly called into question the authority of the Church as interpreter of God’s will for His Creation. Neale has shown how belief in the

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<sup>44</sup> *The Pamphleteer*, 5 (1815), ‘Substance of a Discourse, giving a CHURCHMAN’s reasons for declining a connection with the BIBLE SOCIETY; by the Rev. CHARLES DAUBENY, ARCHDEACON of SARUM’, p. 84.



possibilities of reason and progress were reconciled in a blending of religious belief, reason and science which interpreted God as a constant and active presence in earthly lives. In fact God intervened continually. God had placed man in the world as a free and rational imitation of himself equipped with scriptural advice to be able to interpret His moral system and live by His moral laws.<sup>45</sup> By the late eighteenth century, however, an alternative interpretation of the relationship between revelation and reason suggested instead the idea of God as the architect and first great legislator of the universe. This idea rejected the idea of God intervening constantly in creation but still sought to contain civil society within a rigid moral framework.

In *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith wrote:

The wise and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private interest should be sacrificed to the public interest, equally willing that all of those inferior interests should be sacrificed to the greater interest of the universe, to the interest of that great society of all sensible and intelligent beings, of which God himself is the immediate administrator and director.<sup>46</sup>

Here we have described the social virtues of the patriarchal household as a model of civil government. The hierarchy of a King and loyal orders of society willing to submit themselves to the social and moral disciplines of the family ‘in the interests of that great society...of which God himself is the immediate administrator and director’. The form of the discourse is substantially that of sixteenth century discourses of oeconomy; the context is entirely different. The civil government of oeconomy in which subordination had been given in return for subsistence had been

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<sup>45</sup> R.S. Neale, *Writing Marxist History. British Society, Economy and Culture since 1700* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 33-37.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 65.



voided by the terms of the government of economy and its concerns for the security of private property. That government, as Smith described in *The Wealth of Nations*, was ‘instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have none at all’.<sup>47</sup> If all men must naturally submit to the terms of God’s moral disciplines then the terms of the natural political economy of the law of supply and demand was also a discipline to which all men must submit. The problem for the Dorset gentry was how to justify and legitimise their authority in a society based on private property and inequality. The patriarchal discourses of oeconomy satisfied the gentry’s absolute beliefs in themselves as the natural rulers of an hierarchical and obedient rural society and an emerging discourse of the natural laws of political economy supported their concepts of private property and profit. When these discourses made reference to natural laws they also legitimised in the eyes of the poor notions of their rights to subsistence. As E.P. Thompson reminds us, the complexities of the moral economy of the poor assigned economic roles and endorsed customary practices every bit as much as the so-called moral and rational rules of political economy.<sup>48</sup> The problem for the gentry was that the alternative economic rights of the poor were antithetical to the organisation of modern, improving farming and therefore the rights of the rich. The consequences to the gentry of the poor’s version of economic rights had been demonstrated clearly during the Swing Riots of 1830 and 1831. A combination of riots, strikes, mass meetings, arson attacks and threatening letters had seemed to threaten a revolution. The origin of the poor’s complex economic system, which Okeden characterised in 1832 as ‘daring deportment, the rude speeches, the talk of

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>48</sup> E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1993), p. 340.



“Right” and “Income”, was located and reduced by the gentry to the Scale system.<sup>49</sup>

In Okeden’s words:

This system is the hydra to be crushed; its heads are many, and each is filled with a deadly poison....The destruction of it can be effected now, when the popular voice of so many classes would unite with the Government of the country in that great work.<sup>50</sup>

The question for the Dorset gentry was on what terms would the unnatural laws of the moral economy be destroyed and on what terms should men be required to submit to God’s natural laws? Was God simply to be relegated to a role as first legislator or could his continuing presence as a promise of life eternal be inscribed in every-day relations? The divisions on these issues within the gentry would emerge as different solutions to the question of how the poor might acquire the proper moral sense to apprehend God’s divine will and live independent existences.

Earthly life was now conceived by some of the gentry as a time of resignation to testing and trial which all men and women could pass by their own efforts and thus enter the kingdom of eternal life. In place of inherited sin which condemned the majority to eternal damnation, God now offered the opportunity to men and women to achieve salvation by their own efforts. D.O.P. Okeden, one of Dorset’s most active magistrates, put the new relationship in these terms:

Resignation...has a nobler motive for its basis. It is founded upon one of the noblest Principles of our Religion, upon the principle of the Almighty’s Universal Love. It teaches us that every act which he suffers to take place, is intended for the benefit of Man, and that even the most poignant of our

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<sup>49</sup> *Third Report*, p. 312.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

personal calamities, will ultimately produce either peculiar or general benefits.<sup>51</sup>

It is true that Okeden's presentation of the new contractual relationship placed rather more emphasis on resignation than actively seeking after salvation. But this emphasis may be explained partly by another component of Providential theology which argued that man could not come to know through reason God or his purposes for humankind. Okeden concluded his discourse by arguing: 'If God had commanded Christianity Christians would have been deprived of the merit of adopting it - As it has been, and as it is revealed, our reason and our feeling are perfected by the adoption'.<sup>52</sup> We can begin to see in Okeden's explanations for suffering the identity of an active God to displace the much more distant and detached Supreme being who inhabited the Smithian universe. As a consequence the human subject who held centre stage in the universe of *The Wealth of Nations*, and who was able to reason on his own and others' existence was now replaced by a much more humble creature. The best interests of this newly humbled human would henceforward be revealed by the tests and trials designed by God for His creation. Henceforward also, poverty and all other human miseries would be located in defective human nature rather than an environment corrupted by an unequal distribution of property and power. Following Malthus, and others, moral contamination was identified with an obdurate refusal to imbibe the correct moral lessons inscribed within God's Providential order.

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<sup>51</sup> D.R.O., Fox-Strangways (Ilchester) Archive uncatalogued box 241. Common Place Book of D.O.P. Okeden, 12 January 1803.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



There were, however, contrary opinions to these Malthusian and evangelical doctrines. These contrary views suggested that human nature was, at least in part, formed by the consequences of environmental factors. The general elision of original sin from the equation of poverty and morality may be judged from some of the replies from the Dorset respondents to the questions of the 1818 Select Committee on the Education of the Poor. Matthew Place, the incumbent of Hampreston, a large agricultural parish in south eastern Dorset, made the following reply:

The parishioners are chiefly poor, but formerly prosperous, when smuggling was more in practice; it is a most wretched place, the principles and morality of the major part are so contaminated with smuggling, that it is despaired of reclaiming them, although the rector gives double duty and has not ceased to warn the inhabitants of their danger, both in private and public.<sup>53</sup>

For Place, then, moral contamination was not the product of original sin but of smuggling, a practice which had been born of the poverty of the inhabitants of Hampreston. Although he 'despaired of reclaiming' his parishioners, his attempts to remoralise the poor suggest that his was an optimistic view of the perfectibility of human nature. He was not alone in his optimism. The curate of Rampisham insisted that immorality was a consequence of poverty and not an inherited condition. He informed the Select Committee that 'The poverty of the inhabitants is truly pitiable, and their consequent depravity deplorable'.<sup>54</sup> Respondents from other parishes made similar observations concerning the impact of environmental factors

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<sup>53</sup> *P.P.*, S.C. on the Education of the Poor (1819, IX). Evidence of Harry Place, p. 210.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* Evidence of Michael Lurignan, p. 216.

on human nature, and the requirements of the labour market was the most commonly cited factor preventing the poor from learning to be moral. The incumbents of Bradpole, Pentridge, Symondsbury, Tarrant Gunville, Wambrook, Cranborne and Chardstock each complained that the great first cause of the corruption of human characters was poverty which in turn forced men and women to work long hours leaving little or no time for them to be educated to adopt independent moral lifestyles.<sup>55</sup> The narrative of moral paternalism reconstructed an idea of the independent self partly in terms of a contractual relationship to work and wages. This was not the equitable relationship defined by the older discourse of oeconomy but reflected the growing reality of a tri-partite division of rural society where the majority of people did not own the means of production. The independent self that moral paternalism defined was a poor man or woman wholly dependent on contracted waged labour.<sup>56</sup>

I want to consider next why the constitution by the gentry of the independent moral self by the narrative of moral paternalism was so important in the discourse of the common rules of social life. I will suggest that the independent moral self was constituted as the key to social discipline in early nineteenth century Dorset because it disciplined rich and poor alike. It defined not only the ideal labourer, if I can put it like that, but also the ideal gentleman. I will also suggest that the way in which the independent self was constituted as a narrative means that we can no longer seriously entertain the idea that social control was simply imposed by the gentry. To be part of the particular narrative of independence that I will describe, was to be

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* Evidence of Houghton Hartwell, p. 204; Thomas Hobson, p. 216; Gregory Raymond, p. 218; Francis Simpson, p. 219; Henry Edwards, p. 22; Henry Donne, p. 208 and Henry Edwards, p. 206.

<sup>56</sup> Chapter six.



drawn into subjectivity in a particularly compelling way, as an agent of history and not as its passive object.

The concept 'independence' was intrinsically narrative in character and it signified a story of sequential events organised around implicit and explicit allusions to the Biblical story of the Fall. In the beginning was a state of grace inaugurated by God. This was followed by a fall from grace signified by the triumph of reason over faith. This in turn was followed by expulsion from Eden to be forced to engage in the war of all against all. And the result was that humankind became depraved, demoralised and corrupt. These sequential events could be reversed through Christ and faith in Divine Providence enabling a return to a state of grace and independent moral purity. Independence thus defined gave self-respect irrespective of economic circumstances. This inward dignity of character was a property of soul, upholding men of all degrees. Once got it could never be vanquished. But the question for the gentry to answer was, how could Christ and Divine Providence be brought to bear on the reformation of character? The reverend Dr Rudge, vicar of Hawkchurch, in a conscious reference to Coleridge's exhortation that every man must 'measure his efforts by his power and his sphere of action' put the question and also suggested an answer. He wrote:

Character has little influence in a man whom the world considers, and teaches to consider himself, but as a portion of a map! To be sensible of characters man must feel himself a responsible character, man must feel himself a responsible individual: and to individualise the human being, not only must the reflective power be evolved and disciplined by education, but there must be a property, or profession, or political privilege, or something

equivalent - a certain sphere of free agency to make the man revere himself as a man, and respect the opinions of his fellow men.<sup>57</sup>

Rudge's prescription that 'a certain sphere of free agency' might help create an independent character beneficial to the whole of society suggests a solution in terms of constructing a distinction between character and independence. Character was formed by environment; a wicked environment, he implies, will create a wicked character. Reform the former by creating a certain sphere of free agency and you automatically reform character, or rather you create a moral space in which character may be reformed. It is his implied caveat about moral space that locates Rudge firmly within a narrative of moral paternalism: the idea that material improvement was a direct function of moral growth. This moral space would be so constructed that it determined both the independence of the individual and constituted the individual's soul (in other words its moral capacity) as an instrument of its own governmentality. It followed from this that the governance of the soul would enforce the government of society. In Rudge's words it would 'make the man revere himself as a man, and respect the opinions of his fellow men'. As his ideas suggest, the health and happiness of rural society depended upon the moral fulfilment of the individual. But this left a narrative space in which individual fulfilment might be represented as self-interest. His prescription anticipated this and provided the poor should be taught that the moral space and the independence it defined was located within the idea that God had specified life as an ethical obstacle course. If the purpose of Divine Providence could be taught and learned, then men and women might enforce their own independence to the general benefit and improvement of

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<sup>57</sup> *D.C.C.*, 7 January 1836.



society. But the narrative of moral paternalism in which the self had to struggle with Divine Providence in order to achieve and retain responsible independence also insisted that positive moral choices had to be exercised. However, the narrative left open the question of whether choice could be determined by reason or by revelation. It is in defining the answer to this question that we find the gentry once more searching the terms of their own identity which had been famously articulated by Kenelm Digby in *The Broad Stone Of Honour*. The division between self-interest and virtuous independence had been defined by Digby in cultural terms, as a distinction between a vicious middle class and a morally superior landed gentry. In this way he was able to associate self-interest with materialism, class, power and reason. Whereas virtuous independence was a natural moral condition, a gift from God to all men who put their faith in the goodness of His Divine Providence. In that case, morality and therefore a moral life could never be acquired by reason it could only be revealed by God.

I want to move now to a brief illustration of the operative tensions within the narrative of the independent self to suggest how education and the discourse of the common rules of social life can be seen as the key to social discipline during this period in Dorset.

The Unitarian magistrate Robert Cree argued that the truth of Divine revelation and thus the knowledge of God's purpose for his creation, could be deduced from reason alone and thus people had a moral duty to reason on their existence, from which 'it must follow as a consequence, that the better instructed each individual of society

may be, the wiser, better, and happier, the whole mass must prove'.<sup>58</sup> He continued his argument on the link between, independence, morality and reason and prayed that:

The day is not far distant, when every human being, bearing the stamp of nature's nobility upon him - *the image of God in the faculties of his mind* - shall have the power to attain a full and complete knowledge of all that may raise him in the scale of the intelligent life - fit him for the duties of his earthly pilgrimage - and enable him, the more surely, to become a real disciple of Christ.<sup>59</sup>

His use of the striking metaphor 'the image of God in the faculties of his mind' is a vivid reminder of the tensions over the issue of independence within the discourse of the common rules of social life.<sup>60</sup> Most of the gentry adhered to a 'weaker' variant of independence that acknowledged 'workmen stand in need of a master' and could concur with Cree that education should be used to 'fit [men] for the duties of [their] earthly pilgrimage'. In the terms of gentry self-identities as the divinely ordained rulers of rural society it did not matter much to most of them whether men were mastered directly by their social and cultural betters or indirectly by the Gospel of Christ. In either case independence was a product of Divinely specified providence. It did matter, however, that education should not elevate the power of human reason alone to discover the purposes of Divine providence. To accept that all men should be educated to reason for themselves would have meant that the gentry, quite literally, rejected the terms of their self-identities. The tensions in the narrative of

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<sup>58</sup> D.R.O., D.1433/Q3. R. Cree, *An Introductory Lecture, Delivered at the Town Hall Bridport, on Friday Evening, January 28, 1831, Before The Bridport Association for Mutual Instruction, On opening the Library and Reading Room of the Institution* (Bridport, 1831), p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>60</sup> Chapter seven.



the independent self, between gentry identities and the power of reason, are illustrated in an article submitted to *The Dorset County Chronicle* in January 1826. The pseudonymous HUMANITAS argued that the real distinction between himself and liberal social theorists lay not in the ends they each sought to achieve but in the means to achieve those ends:

These important people [labourers] are demoralised, irreligious and depraved. The great desideratum is to make them religious and moral: in vain shall we look to any philosophical or materialistical society to affect this...These arts perish in the using; a man returns to his dust and then all his thoughts perish. He is an heir of immortality: we wish to see him disciplined for an eternal existence, and instructed in something beyond the wisdom of the world.<sup>61</sup>

A resolution of these tensions was suggested by the Bishop of Bristol in his Primary Charge to the clergy in Dorset. The text so exemplifies the sources and nature of these tensions and their resolution that it merits quotation at length:

It is my persuasion that disquisitions on the evidences of Christianity, however ingenious and profound when addressed to persons in the lower stations of life, will seldom answer the end proposed. Such persons are for the most part unaccustomed to close and accurate reasoning, and are consequently incapable of following us in our argument and of perceiving the connexion between our premises and conclusions. Our appeals must be addressed to the heart rather than the head. We must dwell on the peculiar doctrines of the gospel which, preceding as they did from him who “knew

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<sup>61</sup> *D.C.C.*, 19 January 1826.

what was in man” can be best calculated to command the assent, and to influence the practice of man. It is not by dwelling in our discourses on the nature of the evidence which is necessary to establish the truth of divine revelation, that we can hope effectually to secure our less educated brethren against the insidious attacks of infidelity; but by making them feel the exquisite adaptation of the gospel to the actual condition of man, and thus affording them as it were an experimental proof that it proceeded from the same Almighty being who called man into existence and best knows what his condition requires.<sup>62</sup>

The Bishop of Bristol did not attempt to repudiate the use of reason as an inappropriate method to reveal the evidence of God’s purpose for His Creation. He saw clearly that the problem was not one of choosing between the conventions of rational intellectual enquiry and the traditions of Scriptural interpretations. The nature of the problem was how to construct the mundane realities of everyday routines as part of God’s sacred purpose for his creation. The Bishop’s solution was ‘the exquisite adaptation of the gospel to the actual condition of man’. Associating everyday experiences with the will of God would provide a powerful ‘experimental proof’ of His ends and purposes. This solution, imposed from above, as it were, created its own problems. The decayed organisation and infrastructures of the Church in Dorset left it ill-equipped to catechise the poor in God’s ends and purposes. Rudge’s ingenious recommendations to create moral spaces for the poor in which they might learn God’s moral purposes came up hard against the everyday realities of exploitative relations. As Osborne argued, these relations militated

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<sup>62</sup> *The Pamphleteer*, 20 (1822), ‘The Primary Charge of the Bishop of Bristol in 1821’, p. 361.



against the poor deriving moral purpose from their everyday experiences. 'This breed of people', Osborne noted, 'have but one common idea of religion and virtue - that they are not in any way to be connected with their particular class'.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, as D.O.P. Okeden's analysis of the causes and consequences of the violence of the Swing riots suggest, it seemed to the gentry that the poor had too many moral and intellectual spaces available to reason incorrectly on the causes of their oppression and poverty.<sup>64</sup> A solution was also offered in terms of the legitimate and illegitimate use of reason and here we turn once more to Dr Rudge's remarks on the beneficial effects of the small society. We recall that he argued:

Character has little influence in a man the world considers, and teaches to consider himself, but as a portion of a map! To be sensible of characters man must feel himself a responsible character, man must feel himself a responsible individual: and to individualise the human being, not only must the reflective power be evolved and disciplined by education, but there must be a property, or profession, or political privilege, or something equivalent - a certain sphere of free agency to make the man revere himself as a man, and respect the opinions of his fellow men.<sup>65</sup>

Rudge is using the term character to mean moral constitution, in other words character is an attribute of human nature. Individual and individualise are used by him to define men's separate existence from their environment. By alluding to the impact on human nature that environment must have he is also alluding to evangelical providential theology and its definition of environment as an ethical

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<sup>63</sup> S.G. Osborne, *A View of the Low Moral and Physical Condition of the Agricultural Labourer* (1844), p. 23.

<sup>64</sup> *Third Report*, p. 312.

<sup>65</sup> *D.C.C.*, 7 January 1836.



obstacle course. As we have seen, providential theology argued that Creation had been designed by God as an ethical obstacle course to fit men and women for eternal life in the hereafter. Rudge accepts that life is an obstacle course but sees as problematic the causal link between testing and morality. The problem for Rudge and for men like Osborne and Okeden is how will men stand outside of their environment? How will the poor know they are confronted by an ethical obstacle course if they learn from their social, political and economic relationships that they are an integral part of that environment - a portion of a map? Without an awareness of their separate existence, of their potential immortal destiny, men will reason that life's trials and tests are no more than inconveniences to be endured like the weather. As Osborne had argued, 'men will act religion as they act order; but it is for the purpose of the moment'.<sup>66</sup> They will be unable to escape the defining power of their environment and draw any moral lessons from life. Dr Rudge, then, confronts squarely the issue of how men know that God has specified His Creation as an ethical obstacle course, an issue which many evangelicals seemed to ignore.

Rudge suggested two essential conditions under which men may escape from their 'obedience' to the environment. The first of these conditions is that the realm of obedience and the realm of the use of reason be clearly distinguished. Rudge briefly characterises the environmental trap by his use of the cartographic metaphor, 'Character has little influence in a man whom the world considers, and teaches to consider himself, but as a portion of a map!' He is saying that men are unable to reason on their existence and make moral choices when the environment dictates the ways in which they act and react. Men will be able to make moral choices if, in

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<sup>66</sup> Osborne, *The Low Moral and Physical Condition of the Labourer*, p. 23.



Rudge's words, they are allowed 'a certain sphere of free agency'. He offers certain examples of what might be entailed in a sphere of free agency 'property, or profession, or political privilege', and these are shorthand for 'a stake in society'. For the Dorset poor who were reminded constantly that their only property lay in their labour, we can legitimately speculate that their stake in society might be represented by a fair days pay for a fair days work, in order to purchase wholesome food and decent housing. The issue for Rudge is one of the relationship between the obedience of poor labouring men to the power of farmers. Put another way, he is saying that it is no longer desirable for a farmer's authority to be exercised in the form: *Don't think, just follow orders*. Men will only escape the environmental trap when they are told, or when they learn from their sphere of free agency: *Obey, and you will be able to reason as much as you like*. In the terms of providential theology, however, to be able to reason as much as you like is not the same as freedom of conscience. In fact in separating character from environment and the self, Rudge was identifying a Kantian distinction between the harmful private and beneficial public uses of reason.<sup>67</sup> The potential harmful private use of reason comes about when men are taught and consider themselves to be 'a portion of a map', that is, when men have a role to play in society and jobs to do: to be a farm labourer, to have poor rates to pay, to be a magistrate. All this makes the man a particular segment of society, placed in a private and environmentally circumscribed position, having to apply particular rules and pursue particular ends: not thinking but following orders. From this it follows there is a danger that men are unable to reason outwards from their existence to make informed moral choices but are rather

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<sup>67</sup> On this point see, M. Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment' in P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader. An Introduction To Foucault's Thought* (1991), pp. 36-38.



blindly conditioned to respond to their particular circumstances. Rudge is not suggesting, however, that circumscribed positions should be overthrown by reason but is asking that men should adapt the use they make of their reason to these determined circumstances. And adaptation is to be achieved by men being given a certain sphere of free agency within their particular relationships. This free agency develops their capacity to understand that their particular sets of duties or roles also exist as a part of a general moral relationship to God and His Divine Providence. In this way circumscribed positions are not determining, are not seen as a function of an uncaring environment, but as part of a loving God's Divine Providence for His Creation. And when these determined circumstances are reasoned to be a natural part of men's existence, then men's circumscribed positions will not enforce a blind and foolish obedience. In this way reason itself is made a function of obedience by being subjected to the particular ends in view which are to make men moral by enabling them to obey.

There is still clearly a risk that the use of autonomous reason can be applied publicly to redefine circumstances and relationships. Rudge obviates this partly in a relationship between reason and obedience: men are privately free to reason as much as they like because publicly they may only reason in obedience to the dictates of God's Providence. Obedience is the guarantor of reason and reason guarantees obedience. Rudge also obviates the dangers of autonomous reason by his argument that the reflective power must be evolved and disciplined by education. The role of education will be that of defining the conditions under which the use of reason is legitimate in order to determine what can be known, what must be done, and what may be hoped. The public use of reason becomes the best guarantee of obedience



because Divine Providence is in conformity with reason and this dialectical relationship becomes internalised, partly through education, partly by experience, as the nature of things. The agent of independence was therefore to be the self, and the self and its moral disciplines may be seen as a key to social discipline in Dorset during this period.

Twelve years after Rudge offered the terms of an accommodation between revelation and reason in order to educate the poor to moral and productive lives, Sydney Godolphin Osborne, rector of Bryanstone, vividly described the gulf between these terms and the lived reality for the majority of men, women and children in Dorset. Writing about the employment of women and children in agriculture he observed that the parish was in fact a prison where men and women were held by 'ingenious methods' in 'thralldom'. The labourer was not free to work where he liked and had his wages set by a cabal of local employers. He had to buy his goods at inflated prices or by a system of Truck and if he questioned his conditions he was threatened with the workhouse. He lived out this miserable existence in a house unfit for human habitation for which he paid an exorbitant rent.<sup>68</sup> Four years after his stinging attack on the 'parish prisons' in Dorset, however, we find Osborne describing the clergy's new role as intermediaries and the positive benefits their mediation provided in the parish:

There are very few parishes in England belonging to any proprietor, who is looked up to at all in the world, which have not certain charities and certain means of education more or less good. There is an established connexion, not merely between a clergyman and his flock but between the flock and the

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<sup>68</sup> *P.P.*, Report of Special Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture (1843, XII), p. 92.



squire, through the clergyman. There is no end of this existing now, which I think of the greatest possible use.<sup>69</sup>

Osborne was an exemplar of what Obelkevetch has described as the ‘confident new-style clergy in association with the farmers’.<sup>70</sup> To men like Osborne ‘living for your parish’ essentially meant recreating a community of belonging and mutual respect. What Rudge had earlier described in other terms as a ‘certain sphere of free agency to make the man revere himself as a man, and respect the opinions of his fellow men’. This revitalised parish, according to the members of the Dorset branch of the Church Union, was a parish in which the clergy must adopt an active professional social and political role, in order that they might become the educators, mediators and intermediaries in a struggle to achieve justice between the farmers and labourers.<sup>71</sup> The process by which the gentry struggled to professionalise the Church and themselves had been protracted and difficult. Osborne’s phrase ‘established connexion’ takes us back once more to *The Broad Stone of Honour* and Digby’s general plan for life. It reminds us that throughout this period the gentry’s conduct was not determined by the exigencies of the moment but by reference to the different terms of the moral purposes inscribed within their self-identities. It reminds us also that their self-identities - who they were, what they thought, what they knew, and what they talked about - were produced by the various discourses they encountered and used.

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<sup>69</sup> P.P., S.C. on Settlement and Removal (1847, XI). Evidence of Sidney Godolphin Osborne from Bryanstone, p. 570.

<sup>70</sup> J. Obelkevetch, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-75* (Oxford, 1976), p. 160.

<sup>71</sup> D.R.O., PE/SH/AL2/33. Anon., *Reasons for the Union and Co-operation of Churchmen in Furtherance of their Common Objects* (1849). The Dorset members were: the reverends W. Palmer (Whitchurch Canonorum), H. Bennett (Lyme Regis), A. Shirley (Stinsford), S. Lane (Frome Vauxchurch), F.J. Rooke (Rampisham), S.C. Malan (Broadwindsor), W. Ponsonby (Canford Magna), G. Arden (Winterborne Came); together with the lay members, F.P.B. Martin (Dorchester) and G. Cartwright (Lyme Regis).



## CHAPTER NINE

### *Conclusion*

I began my case history with the premise that the older usage of referential ideas of language have trapped historians of the Dorset gentry inside an equation of consciousness and experience that conceals far more than it reveals. I continued by suggesting that one way out of this trap was to consider language as patterns and relationships that constitute understanding by constructing meaning through differentiation. I do not suggest that my interpretation of the gentry has got it right and all the others have got it wrong but rather that their unwitting assumptions and procedures cannot deliver the certainty of knowledge which they promise. I would therefore also suggest that my approach to historical practice has allowed me to ask appropriate questions. For example, were the gentry creative agents, who wrote their own life stories? Or were they constituted subjects, whose destinies were dictated by biographical forces outside of their control? If so, how should we make sense of such forces? Are they normative, material, cultural, discursive or what? Or is gentry life best understood from both structural and action viewpoints - as a time when, though they could try to be who they wanted to be, they nevertheless did so in structural circumstances not of their choosing?

The gentry landowners who managed the day to day affairs of the county in petty sessions and quarter sessions did not spring fully formed at some time in a distant past. The accounts of their longevity and common governing purpose were necessary inventions created by them to resist encroachments to their power and

justify their role as the natural rulers of rural society. The challenges to gentry self-identities came from outside and within the county. From outside the county the activities of a centralising state undermined the power of the gentry to decide amongst themselves the future prescription for the government of rural society. From within Dorset, the old certainties of the gentry were also being increasingly questioned and challenged. In particular their self-defined natural right to rule. The identities in which their inventions dealt were not fictions. They were rather defined in opposition to a variety of undesirable others. These identities were at once the means and the ends of the ways in which the gentry acquired knowledge of social life.

Dorset society quite clearly did not experience directly the sort of industrialisation experienced in other parts of Britain from the late eighteenth century. Nevertheless the county was never an isolated backwater immune to the political, cultural and economic upheavals experienced elsewhere. The gentry had increasingly to shift to the cultural and political values of metropolitan London.

The gentry's concerns over the prospects of post-war agriculture and the future of rural society were expressed partly in a discourse of the cultural superiority of the countryside as an antidote to the encroachment of the city and the industrial middle class. Their concerns also found concrete expression in their support for protection by which they sought to protect themselves by sustaining a barrier against the overweening political pretensions of industry. Change was resisted by some of the gentry who identified Dorset as an organic inheritance, already fully achieved in the past, although threatened in the present. Hence their penchant for inherited discourses of obligations of stewardship derived from religion and defined in terms



of patriarchal relationships to the other (subordinate) groups. These discourses were an accommodation to the industrial revolution and not a rejection of its terms.

The many assumptions held by the gentry about the nature of society, the purpose of an earthly existence, human nature, work and rewards were couched in Christian religious terms. By expressing the city and metropolitan values as unchristian, even ungodly, the religious world view of the gentry allowed many of them to see themselves as a chosen people, and Dorset as a chosen land. The gentry could contrast their character, their occupations, their morality, their wealth, their rural world with a sense of superior difference against trade and the city. In this broad sense, then, religion lay at the core of gentry identity and the identities they attached to the county and the parish. The terms of this difference opposed ideas of class to ideas of culture and came to be the keywords of the struggle. They were the terms of orders, duties and responsibilities. It was impossible for the gentry to accept undiluted the terms of political economy because such acceptance would lead to the destruction of their ancient privileges. On the other hand it was impossible to rest in the traditional language of stewardship and patriarchy because they could be so easily contradicted by their class enemies, the urban and rural business classes and political radicals and even their own tenant farmers and labourers.

Externally more unified than they were internally homogeneous the Dorset gentry who were appointed from the seventeen-nineties to the Commission of the Peace were a loose coalition of different fractions which came to be dominated by a relatively small number of active magistrates. By becoming a more unitary fraction of the ruling class, the active magistracy helped consolidate the social and political primacy of all the gentry. What the active magistracy did in the name of public



interest through the machinery of general sessions, signalled their reluctant retreat from the direct management and control of the continuous daily business of the parish. They gradually redefined and restricted their role to the administration of justice. This active magistracy gradually recreated the structures and institutions of county government with the forms of the patriarchal household but the substance of contractual economics. The form of the household was the Commission of the Peace and its architectural spaces of the quarter and petty sessions. The substance of county government, however, was concerned with rational, economical management of the county's incomes and expenditures to increase the wealth of the county rather than to regulate the trade between different households. The idea of the responsible patriarch who alone regulated the finances of his household was vitiated by the committee system which vested the power to commit expenditure in the active magistracy. The reorganisation of the Commission of the Peace was an attempt to recreate, in other terms, the form of a patriarchal household comprised of a federation of patriarchs, rather than a federation of patriarchal households.

The moral distinctions the gentry drew between countryside and town were vitiated by the growth in urban populations and the physical encroachments of the town into the countryside. When the active magistrate Lewis Tregonwell first settled at Bournemouth (at that time a town in the county of Hampshire) at the end of the eighteenth century, it was a tiny hamlet in a wilderness of heathland. By the eighteen sixties its buildings had engulfed this heathland and were encroaching up to the border with Dorset. This process of urbanisation was recorded by Dr Hunter. In 1865 he visited Kinson, a parish on the eastern border of Dorset with Hampshire, where he found many men employed in building work at the rapidly expanding town



of Bournemouth.<sup>1</sup> This narrowing of the physical and cultural gaps between the town and the countryside was later fictionalised by Thomas Hardy in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Hardy probably had in mind as his model of the fictional Mixen Lane the parish of Fordington (the 'industrial' suburb of nineteenth century Dorchester). He described the Lane and its inhabitants in the following terms:

Mixen Lane...was the hiding-place of those who were in distress, and in debt, and in trouble of every kind. Farm-labourers and other peasants, who combined a little poaching with their farming, and a little brawling...with their poaching, found themselves sooner or later in Mixen Lane. Rural mechanics too idle to mechanize, rural servants too rebellious to serve, drifted or were forced into Mixen Lane.<sup>2</sup>

The Mixen Lanes of Dorset were experienced by the gentry through the filter of a particular vision of the parish as an earthly arena of divine providence. This vision projected a set of ideals, in institutions and behaviour. It prescribed the sorts of moral behaviour expected of the poor and their employers and defined the limits to gentry authority. If this vision of the parish could not stop history then it could and did underpin institutions that the gentry hoped would exclude inappropriate interpretations of the historical process.

The gentry's field of knowledge of the morality of the poor became occupied by a discussion of the poor laws, human nature and environment. The administration of poor relief after 1792 was characterised by a strategy that depended on a classification of the poor that favoured relieving the low paid married man with

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<sup>1</sup> R. Samuel, 'Village Labour' in *Essays in Social History* (eds), P. Thane and A. Sutcliffe (Oxford, 1986), vol. 2, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

children. Put simply, poor allowances were calculated by reference to the price of bread and the size of a man's family. And the offer of relief was automatic and did not invariably depend on an assessment of character. This relief strategy was gradually (and successfully) challenged by the gentry's adaptation of Malthusian population theory and Evangelical theodicy. Theory and theodicy defined earthly existence as an ecological trap designed to promote activity to secure subsistence. The gentry believed, largely, that the state of nature should provide material for inferring the existence and character of God. Nineteenth-century versions of natural theology, as embodied in William Paley's classic *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, tended to argue that God's nature and benevolence were manifest in the excellent design of organisms and the harmony of ecosystems.

Natural theology was influential in revealing the fractures in the gentry's self-identities as paternalists. The gentry began by acknowledging that struggle plays a central role in the life of people and provided the chief impetus for their moral development. But struggle was not viewed as a unitary phenomenon. It was divided into two fundamentally different forms with contrary meanings for moral development. Following Malthus they accepted that population grew geometrically while the means of subsistence increased only arithmetically. And here the fracture in paternalist identities begins. Material paternalists argued that this form of direct struggle led to competition for personal benefit. In that case they were permitted to intervene directly in the environment to ensure that competition was fair and to rescue the inevitable losers of this direct struggle. But moral paternalists defined competition in subtly different ways. They argued that competition pitted people against an environment designed by God as a series of trials and tribulations, not



against their fellow people. These forms of struggle between people and an environment (and not between people) were designed to test moral characters. This required that the gentry co-operate with God's divine will by not interfering with His providential environment. This solution to the problems of the subsistence and moral characters of the poor did not include an improvement of environment so that characters would improve. To do so would be to interrupt the natural workings of Divine Providence and obviate the reforming nature of ethical obstacles. The gentry were fully prepared to mitigate those parts of the environment that did not form a part of God's ethical obstacle course and could not therefore induce the poor to make moral choices. Thus it was quite safe for the gentry to build model housing, to improve village sanitation and water supplies, or to provide allotments, gardens and potato ground. It was not safe to regulate the price of bread, the market for labour and the rate of wages.

The self-identity of the gentry as scientific administrators now constituted their role as the supervising of contracts after they had been consummated. The transformation of the terms of gentry identities may be seen in a common strategy of supervision and prevention. Okeden's plan of poor law reform may be understood as an attempt to expose the whole of Dorset society to the chastening effects of providence. First, by identifying pauperism (not poverty) as the region within the population that threatened the moral and political stability of rural society; second, by establishing common legal rights and common regulations against the imprudent charity and arbitrary administration of the existing systems of relief; third, by proposing systems to make transparent the operation of these rights and regulations as a permanent administrative apparatus of supervision.



The gentry's concern for the administration of the poor laws should not be seen narrowly in economic or political terms. Economic concerns, of course shaped the ways in which the gentry saw the social order, but neither these, nor political concerns, give an adequate account of how they saw things. This account is to be sought in the much broader concerns evident in what they felt the ends of human existence to be: 'all the common rules of social life'. What is striking about the so-called paternalist narrative of the Dorset gentry, however, is not a narrow concern with social control. The striking fact is how different gentry landowners and others grappled with lines of distinction. These distinctions may be seen as the ways the gentry contrasted individual discretion with the natural laws of providence; or human nature with the environment; or independent character with morality. The identity of economic relations as moral relations was created in the comparisons between reason (the wisdom of the world) and theology. This identity was rooted in competing understandings of human nature. Both narratives constituted economic relations as moral relations. They also identified mankind's time on earth as a time of trial and testing to be passed fit to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The nostrums of economic paternalism certainly indicated the divisions that had grown up within the gentry, but they did not contradict the notion of rights and responsibilities as patriarchy envisaged them. Moral paternalists also taught that distress was the result of overpopulation and loss of independence. The narrative of moral paternalism was not seen as the ideology of the gentry, but the true, unselfish and Biblical view of human nature. This narrative enabled moral paternalists to present themselves as the protectors of the poor. Moral paternalists promised to reform the poor laws to rescue the poor from the degrading, demoralising operation



of poor law allowances. In place of poor relief the poor would be offered the uplifting and regenerating disciplines of work. A reformed system of relief would help raise wages and would benefit masters by preventing unfair competition between them and increasing productivity. Fair competition would not only raise wages and profits it would also raise morale and morality. Reformed relief would help reveal God's natural laws of political economy. In unreformed parishes, however, good employers were forced to follow bad masters in subsidising and lowering wages, since competition left them no option. Both narratives constructed the gentry as members of the morally superior class in rural society in opposition to the city bred middle classes. The narrative of moral paternalism went further and constructed this opposition in wider terms. It constituted interference in the natural order as the presumptuous acts of a morally inferior middle-class. The morally superior self-identity of the gentry was therefore defined in opposition to any interference in a morally defined natural providence. The whole policy of preferring to employ married men rather than single men may be reinterpreted as a residue of the older conception of the burdens of the poor: increasing the numbers of the poor to increase the wealth of the household. But the influence of political economy meant the gentry could only make populousness coincide with wealth on the condition of low wages and a docile obedient workforce. One solution was the institution of allowances for married men that tied a low paid workforce to the soil but without the necessary corollary of making them obedient. This solution offended against patriarchal theories of an obedient hierarchical society and denied the terms of the political economy of market theories, and the natural laws of God's



Providence. The problem for the gentry was how to bind the poor to the soil and make them obedient without resort to the poor laws.

The parish and its other institutions were rediscovered as the social, moral and administrative unit in which men of good will could seek to revitalise Dorset society. In its idealised form, the parish was a reinvention of older identities of an hierarchical social order. The Squire was at the pinnacle of this parish, doling justice and equity for all by reference to God's divinely ordained providence, common-sense truths and human nature. Such an idealised form could only be sustained if its proponents and recipients articulated their demands and desires in a common language which associated poverty with a self-inflicted crisis in morality. This dichotomy in ideas of the parish reflected a division between magistrates on the impact of their historical governing role in parish government. The redefinition of their governing role was centred upon the issue of if it was safe to intervene in parish government and what form that intervention should take. The issue was not simply that the old habits of intervention should be replaced by a new role in which magistrates should merely supervise the workings of natural economic laws. Intervention was not condemned or refuted because it was now realised always to have been misguided and inappropriate. Rather it was refuted because its meaning had changed in changing circumstances and older habits of intervention could now no longer perform even the approximate social function they had once performed.

The idea of social function takes us back to *The Broad Stone of Honour* and Digby's arguments against the contingent conduct of a materialistic middle class. A gentleman's conduct was not determined by the exigencies of the moment but by reference to a moral purpose inscribed within a general plan for life. The question



for the gentry was how the Dorset poor could be brought to a knowledge of God's moral purpose for them? The gentry's ambitious question was answered by the institution of a system of sectarian school education that taught the poor to be moral and hardworking. Their ambitions were articulated in the second report of Dorset Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor 1813 in which the newly established Society hoped:

The period is not very distant, when every child, residing in the most obscure Hamlet in the County, will have the advantage of this system of religious education, under the superintendence of the Clergy and others, whose anxious solicitude for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Poor will induce them to preside over these Seminaries of Virtue and Industry.<sup>3</sup>

These Seminaries of Virtue and Industry provided a largely moribund Anglican church establishment an opportunity to begin to revivify its spiritual responsibilities for the cure of souls. Whatever the results for formal education, and the evidence suggests that these Seminaries of Virtue and Industry achieved little beyond a little rote learning, day schools and Sunday schools taught the poor to lead industrious, sober and obedient lives.

The poor were also taught to lead moral and hard working lives through other parish agencies. Dorset magistrate the Reverend Samuel Best enumerated the agencies that any good parish might be expected to maintain:

Infant, day, evening and Sunday schools; weekly lecture M[onday], W[ednesday] or F[riday] at 6), singing class, and Sunday lecture (2 p.m. in the Vestry); parochial library, school, coal and rice funds; Provident society

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<sup>3</sup> *Account of the Proceedings of the Dorset Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, Second Report* (Dorchester, 4 August 1813).

(Combining Savings Club, Clothes Club, and Sick benefit Society); Baby

linen society; allotments; and a branch of the SPG.<sup>4</sup>

Correct social attitudes were enforced by shaming and expulsion from the benefits of the parallel parish. Samuel Best provides three examples of this from his home parish of Wynford Eagle. In the first, a young woman, who was called as a witness before a magistrate, admitted being out after dark in a beer shop with 'loose' company. She was censured and warned that a similar offence would precipitate expulsion from the Provident society. A copy of the censure was sent to her parents and fixed up in a public place. In the second, cockfighting was started in the parish and a public warning was issued that anyone involved would be expelled from the Provident society. Best recorded that the cockfighting soon ceased. In the third example, a woman convicted of a petty felony was expelled from the Provident society and her contributions were forfeited to the general fund.<sup>5</sup> Allotments typified the assistance that the gentry gave to their parishioners. In particular clergymen like Best, by renting out their glebes at moderate rents were able, as they saw it, to help the labourer help himself. Allotments were regarded as important because they attached the labourer to his parish and taught him to respect the rights of property, in which he could now feel a personal interest. Allotments were thus presented as a privilege and frequently awarded or withheld by reference to the character of the labourer. And character was established by a labourer's activities and demeanour within the other institutions of the parallel parish. As Best argued, an allotment was, 'a privilege...dependent on the performance of duties of a higher

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<sup>4</sup> S. Best, *Manual of Parochial Instruction* (1849), p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.



nature, and the school list, the sacrament list, and even the Provident society may be looked through to determine who shall have the offer of the next vacant allotment'.<sup>6</sup>

During this period the gentry had successfully mapped out a field of action. This caused their efforts to reform the structures of local government, to reform the poor laws and institute a county wide system of education. Difficult lessons had been painfully learned. The gentry accepted, however reluctantly, that they were partly responsible for some of their misfortunes, and that their behaviour would also have to be modified. It proved a hard task for the gentry to remoralise the poor. It was sometimes an even harder task for the gentry to change their own behaviour and there was still much left to do after 1835. Looking forward into the 1850's the reforms to structures would form the basis of what I have termed a "parallel parish". This parish within a parish excluded all the conventional political forms of parish government, and excluded also the market structures which allocated waged labour. Here was a parish of gentry discretionary rule and gentry charitable agencies. The parallel parish was an arena that would enable the gentry to transfer and transform their political energies away from a direct involvement in parochial management. The parallel parish and its institutions were conceived as a source of stability to override or exclude the social and political contradictions of lived reality. I have tried to show how the governing purposes inscribed within gentry constructed identities, in particular the reform of the poor laws, were both the means and the ends of the gentry's ambitious project to remoralise and purify rural society. Thus I would conclude with the suggestion that the gentry's reconstruction of social and political identities during this period was an attempt to incorporate rich and poor,

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

powerful and powerless, within the terms of what David Parry Okeden had called  
‘all the common rules of social life’.



# APPENDIX A

## *The Gentry Magistrates, 1790-1835*

Table A1.1: *Magistrates attendance at university*

Magistrate	Oxford	Cambridge	Degree
Arnold JH	Brasenose		BCL
Ashley Lord	Christchurch		BA
Baker EB Sir	Christchurch		
Bankes E		Trinity	LLB
Bankes G		Trinity	BA
Bankes H		Trinity	BA
Bankes WJ		Trinity	BA
Bastard J	Wadham		BA
Bastard TH	Wadham		Mat
Best S		Kings	
Bingham R jnr	Magdalen		BA
Birch TW	Christchurch		BA
Blackmore R	Merton		BA
Bond J	Wadham		MA
Bond T	Wadham		BA
Bower E		Jesus	BA
Bower HT		Peterhouse	BA
Bradford E		Corpus Christi	BA
Bragge CP	St Mary Hall (and)	Jesus	LLB
Bragge J	Merton (and)	Trinity	LLB
Brice T	Pembroke		Mat
Brickdale JF	Christchurch		BA
Bridge J	Trinity		Mat
Bristed N		Emmanuel	BA
Brookland WJ	Merton		BA
Brouncker R	Christchurch		Mat
Buckley EP	Christchurch		Mat
Bullock J	Worcester		BA
Burland JB	Corpus Christi		
Calcraft JH	Christchurch		Mat
Cholmondley HG	Balliol		BA
Churchill W	Worcester		BA
Churchill WRH	Worcester		BA
Clavell J		St Johns	BA
Clavell W		St Johns	
Colmer J	Wadham		BA
Colson JM	Balliol		BA
Compton HC	Merton		Mat
Cooper A A	Christchurch		BA
Cooper B	Wadham		BA
Coventry F	Pembroke		Mat
Cox S	University College		BA
Dade T		Caius	BA
Damer L		Trinity	MA
Dampier J	Wadham		BA
Davis J	Jesus		BA
Dickinson FH		Trinity	BA
Digby C	Christchurch		BA
Digby CW		St Johns	BA
Digby Earl	Christchurch		Mat
Digby Henry			
Digby KH	Christchurch (and)	Trinity	BA
Digby R		Emmanuel	
Digby W	Christchurch		BA
Disney J	Oxford		

Table A1.1: *Cont.*

Donne H	St Edmund Hall		Mat
Douglas W	Christchurch		BA
Dowland J	Christchurch		
Dowland JJG	Wadham		BA
Elton EM	Brasenose		BA
England W		St Johns	BA
England Wjnr		St Johns	BA
Fane F		Corpus Christi	Mat
Farquharson HJ	Christchurch		Mat
Farquharson JJ	Christchurch		Mat
Farquharson JJjnr	Christchurch		BA
Fisher J	University College		BA
Fleming TJW		Trinity	BA
Floyer W	Queens		Mat
Foster AB	Exeter		Mat
Fox TL		Christchurch	Mat
Frampton H		St Johns	BA
Frampton J		St Johns	BA
Frampton WC		Trinity	BA
Freke J	Wadham	Emmanuel	BA
Frome GC	Merton		BA
Frome R	Wadham		BCL
Fryer CG		St Johns	BA
Fyler JC	Trinity		BA
Glyn C	Christchurch		BA
Glyn RP Sir	Brasenose		MA
Glynn Carr	Christchurch		BA
Goforth F		Emmanuel	BA
Gollop GT	Brasenose		Mat
Gooden J	Corpus Christi		BA
Gooden WJ	Oriel		BA
Gordon R	Christchurch		BA
Gould G	Merton		Mat
Gould G	Wadham		BA
Greathead EH	Oxford (college unknown)		
Grosvenor RED	Christchurch		Mat
Grove T		St Johns	MA
Grove WF	St Mary Hall		BA
Haines HC	Pembroke		Mat
Hampden J	Worcester		
Hanham P		Peterhouse	BA
Hardwicke TB	St Johns		Mat
Harris JG		Kings	BA
Hartwell H	New College		BA
Helyar J	Hertford		
Howe S		Emmanuel	
Hussey T	Brasenose		BA
Hutchings G		Trinity	
Hyde GH	Wadham		
Jacob GT	Trinity		Mat
Jones M	Jesus		BA
King R	All Souls		BA
King WM	Christchurch		BA
Knight JF	St Mary Hall		Mat
Mansel JC		St Johns	BA
Marsham Viscount	Christchurch		BA
Maysey A	Christchurch.		BA
Medlycott WC Sir		Trinity	
Medlycott WCjnr	Trinity		Mat
Meech G	Christchurch		BA
Meyrick W		St Johns	BA
Michel C	Oriel		Mat
Michel DR	Brasenose		Mat
Michel J		Emmanuel	BA
Minet CW	University College		BA
Munden J	Queens		BA



Table A1.1: *Cont.*

Murray E		Trinity	BA
Nepean E Sir		Trinity	BA
Nepean MH Sir		Trinity	BA
Oglander H	Christchurch		Mat
Oglander J	St Johns		
Oglander W Sir	New College		BA
Okeden DOP		Trinity	Mat
Parsons J	Worcester		BA
Paxton WG	Merton		MA
Payne S	Trinity		BA
Peacock E		Trinity	BA
Penfold GS	Merton		BA
Penn J			Clare
Phelips C	University College		
Phelips J	Christchurch		BA
Phelips W	Trinity		BA
Pickard E		St Johns	
Pickard Gsnr	Merton		BCL
Pickard JT	New College		BCL
Pinney W		Trinity	BA
Pitt WM	Queens		Mat
Place H	Wadham		BA
Pleydell EM	University College		Mat
Ponsonby CFAC		Trinity	BA
Portman H		Trinity	BA
Portman Lord		St Johns	BA
Price AC	New College		BA
Raymond G	Balliol		BA
Richards J	Brasenose		BCL
Richards W	Trinity		Mat
Richards WP	New College		BCL
Rolle Lord		Emmanuel	BA
Romney Earl	Christchurch		BA
Salkeld R	C Christi		BA
Scott WHJ	University College		Mat
Serrell S	Merton		BA
Seymer H	All Souls		DCL
Seymer HK	Corpus Christi		BA
Seymer HKjnr	Christchurch		BA
Shaftesbury	Christchurch		
Sherive H	Wadham		DCL
Simpson F	University College		BD
Smith JJ		Trinity	Mat
Smith Sir J		Trinity	MA
Smith Wyldebore		Trinity	BA
Ilchester Earl	Christchurch		DCL
Stavordale Lord	Christchurch		Mat
Strangways CRFox	Christchurch		BCL
Strangways HF	Pembroke		BA
Strangways WTHFox	Christchurch		MA
Sturt C		Trinity	BA
Sturt HC	Christchurch		Mat
Synge Sir E	Christchurch		BA
Templeman N		Trinity	BA
Templer GH	Merton		BA
Templer JA	Merton		BA
Toogood W	Oriel		Mat
Tregonwell J	Christchurch		Mat
Tregonwell LDG	Trinity		Mat
Trenchard G	Merton		
Tucker A	Wadham		BA
Uxbridge Earl	Christchurch		.
Venables J	Corpus Christi		BA
Watts J	University College		BA
West EW	St Johns		BA
Westminster Marq.		Trinity	



Table A1.1: *Cont.*

Williams E	University College		Mat
Williams R	Pembroke		BA
Williams Rjnr	Oriel		BA
Wingfield GD	Christchurch		BA
Wingfield JD	Exeter		BA
Wollastone CB		St Johns	BA
Wyndham JH	Wadham		BCL
Wyndham T	Wadham		DCL
Yeatman HF	Balliol		BCL
Yeatman HFjnr	Balliol		BA

Table A1.2: *Magistrates not attending university*

Arbuthnott J	Digby Sir H	Kneller JK	Schuyler F
Bain A	Doughty E	Lester BL	Seymer GA
Baring H	Drax JSWSE	Lester J	Shute R
Barker WA	Drewe TR	Linthorne B	Somerset Lord
Barnes T	Eldon Earl	Loftus GC	St Lo E
Bayley Sir H	Elton RJ	Manning CA	Steele SirR
Beckford WH	Fane Sir Hbt	Meggs T	Stein J
Bennett J	Foster A	Milton Viscount	Steward F
Best S	Fox T	Monro HB	Steward GT
Bethel WJ	Garland G	Nepean E	Strangways C
Beverley Earl	Garland JB	Oglander W	Strangways CF
Bingham Sir GR	Glyn RTJ	Okeden WP	Strangways GDFox
Bond W	Glynn Sir RC	Orford Earl	Strangways SDF
Boucher W	Goodforde H	Pedler PW	Strangways TF
Bower TB	Goodforde J	Pickard Gjnr	Talbot H
Bower TB jnr	Grant Sir C	Pickard GT	Thompson GN
Bowles C	Greathead E	Pickard H	Tregonwell Sir B
Bragge J	Grove Tjnr	Pickard HW	Tucker W
Browne FJ	Hallett W	Pickard T	Walpole Lord
Browne JH	Hanham W	Pine AC	Wedgewood J
Chafin W	Hartwell F Sir	Pinney JF	Weld C
Chapman A	Hawkins JA	Pitt G	Weld H
Child Sir C	Hawkins S	Pitt H	Weld J
Coles JB	Hoare Sir RC	Pitt W	Weld James
Colmer R	Hodges WP	Ponsonby WFS	Wentworth FT
Cooper AWA	Hussey J	Pretor S	White J
Cunningham A	Hussey J	Purling G	Willett JW
Damer HD	Ilchester Earl	Purling J	Williams D
Davis M	Jacob GTjnr	Richards Wjnr	Williams J
Deane J	Jeffrey J	Russell C	Wingfield RB
Digby Adml H	King HC	Salkeld W	Wynford Lord
Digby CS			

Table A2.1: *Gentry marriages and kinship relations 1790-99*

ACLAND	STRANGWAYS	Frampton, Haines Mansel, Digby
BECKFORD	RIVERS	Fox-Lane, Meyrick
BROWNE	RICHARDS	Clavell, Floyer, Moysey, Bingham, Damer, Pleydell, Michel, Fane, Hodges
CHOLMONDLEY	PITT	
CHURCHILL	TEMPLEMAN	
CLAVELL	BINGHAM	Floyer, Moysey, Browne, Richards, Damer, Pleydell, Michel, Fane, Hodges
CLAVELL	DAMER	Floyer, Moysey, Browne, Richards, Pleydell, Bingham, Michel, Fane, Hodges
CLAVELL	PLEYDELL	Floyer, Moysey, Browne, Richards, Bingham, Damer, Michel, Fane, Hodges
CLAVELL	RICHARDS	Browne, Floyer, Moysey, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Michel, Fane, Hodges
DIGBY	WINGFIELD	Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland
FLOYER	RICHARDS	Clavell, Browne, Moysey, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Michel, Fane, Hodges
FOX-LANE	RIVERS	Meyrick, Beckford
FRAMPTON	STRANGWAYS	Acland, Haines, Mansel, Digby



Table A2.1: *Cont.*

GOULD	GOODDEN	Wentworth, Smith
GREATHEAD	GLYN	
HARBIN	PHELIPS	
HOSKINS	HOOD	
HUTCHINGS	MEDLYCOTT	
MEYRICK	RIVERS	Fox-Lane, Beckford
MICHEL	BINGHAM	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Moysey, Pleydell, Damer, Richards, Fane, Hodges
MICHEL	FANE	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Moysey, Pleydell, Damer, Richards, Bingham, Hodges
MICHEL	HODGES	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Moysey, Pleydell, Damer, Richards, Bingham, Fane
MONRO	BOWER	
PAYNE	PICKARD	Trenchard
PORTMAN	WYNDHAM	
RICHARDS	BINGHAM	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Moysey, Fane, Pleydell, Damer, Michel, Hodges
RICHARDS	MOYSEY	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Michel, Fane, Hodges
RICHARDS	PLEYDELL	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Moysey, Bingham, Damer, Michel, Fane, Hodges
SEYMER	RIVERS	Fox-Lane, Meyrick, Beckford
SMITH	GOULD	Goodden, Wentworth
STRANGWAYS	DIGBY	Acland, Frampton, Haines, Mansel
STRANGWAYS	HAINES	Acland, Frampton, Digby, Mansel
STRANGWAYS	MANSEL	Acland, Frampton, Haines, Digby
STURT	SHAFTESBURY	
TALBOT	SOMERSET	
TREGONWELL	KING	
TRENCHARD	PICKARD	Payne
WENTWORTH	GOULD	Goodden, Smith
WILLIAMS	ARBUTHNOTT	Hawkins
WILLIAMS	HAWKINS	Arbuthnott

Table A2.2: *Gentry marriages and kinship relations 1800-09*

BENNET	LAMBERT	
BURLAND	GORDON	
FARQUHARSON	PHELIPS	Harbin
MINET	POLE	
PLEYDELL	FROME	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Michel, Fane, Hodges, Still
PLEYDELL	MICHEL	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still
SEYMER	RIVERS	Fox-Lane, Meyrick, Beckford
STILL	BINGHAM	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Michel, Frome
TREGONWELL	PORTMAN	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Wingfield
WINGFIELD	PORTMAN	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Tregonwell

Table A2.3: *Gentry marriages and kinship relations 1810-19*

ARBUTHNOTT	FANE	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Pleydell, Michel, Mansel, Grant, Sheridan, King, Wyndham, Stranways, Frampton, Haines, Acland, Digby, Tregonwell, markland, Monro, Smith, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Portman
CLAVELL	MANSELL	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Pleydell, Michel, Arbuthnott, Grant, Sheridan, King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Acland, Digby, Tregonwell, Markland, Monro, Smith, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Portman
GRANT	BROWNE	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Pleydell, Michel, Arbuthnott, Mansel, Sheridan, King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Acland, Digby, Tregonwell, Markland, Monro, Smith, Goodden,



		Wentworth, Gould, Portman, Wingfield-Digby
GROVE	HUSSEY	
OKEDEN	GREATHEAD	Glyn
PLEYDELL	BINGHAM	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Pleydell, Michel, Arbuthnott, Grant, Mansel, Sheridan, King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Acland, Digby, Tregonwell, Markland, Monro, Smith, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Portman, Wingfield-Digby
PLEYDELL	MANSELL	Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Bingham, Michel, Arbuthnott, Grant, Mansel, Sheridan, King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Acland, Digby, Tregonwell, Markland, Monro, Smith, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Portman, Wingfield-Digby
PORTMAN	WINGFIELD-DIGBY	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Tregonwell, Markland, Monro, Smith, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Browne, Clavell, Floyer, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Pleydell, Michel, Arbuthnott, Sheridan, Grant, Bingham, Michel, Arbuthnott, Grant, Mansel, Sheridan, King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Acland, Digby,
SEYMER	BASTARD	Davis, Pitt, Fox-Lane, Meyrick, Beckford, Rivers, Cholmondley
SEYMER	DAVIS	Bastard, Pitt, Fox-Lane, Meyrick, Beckford, Rivers, Cholmondley
SEYMER	PITT	Bastard, Davis, Fox-Lane, Meyrick, Beckford, Rivers, Cholmondley
SHERIDAN	BROWNE	Clavell, Floyer, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Pleydell, Michel, Arbuthnott, Mansel, Grant
TREGONWELL	MARKLAND	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Wingfield-Digby, Monro, Portman, Smith, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould,
TREGONWELL	MONRO	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Markland, Wingfield-Digby, Portman, Smith, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould
WINGFIELD-DIGBY	SMITH	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould

Table A2.4: *Gentry marriages and kinship relations 1820-29*

ELDON	BANKES	
FARQUHARSON	GROVE	Hussey, Phelps, Harbin
FLOYER	RUSSELL	Clavell, Sheridan, Bingham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Pleydell, Michel, Arbuthnott, Mansel, Grant
FYLER	BAIN	
HALLETT	RADCLYFFE	
PONSONBY	SHAFTESBURY	Sturt
PORTMAN	DIGBY	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Markland, Tregonwell, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Wingfield-Digby, Smith, Pinney, Templer
SMITH	PINNEY	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Wingfield-Digby, Templer
SMITH	WINGFIELD-DIGBY	King, Wyndham, Strangways, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Pinney, Templer
STRANGWAYS	TEMPLER	King, Wyndham, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Acland, Digby, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Pinney, Wingfield-Digby, Smith

Table A2.5: *Gentry marriages and kinship relations 1830-35*

ACLAND	WILLIAMS	King, Wyndham, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Digby, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Pinney, Wingfield-Digby, Smith, Templer, Arbuthnott, Hawkins, Floyer, Russell, Clavell, Sheridan, Bungham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Michell, Mansell, Grant, Strangways, Helyar
COX	BECKFORD	Bastard, Davis, Fox-Lane, Meyrick, Beckford, Rivers, Cholmondley, Seymer, Pitt
DISNEY	BROUNCKER	
ELDON	BANKES	
FLOYER	DIGBY	King, Wyndham, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould,



		Pinney, Wingfield-Digby, Smith, Templer, Arbuthnott, Hawkins, Russell, Clavell, Sheridan, Bungham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Michell, Mansell, Grant, Acland, Williams, Strangways, Helyar
ILCHESTER	DIGBY	King, Wyndham, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Pinney, Wingfield-Digby, Smith, Templer, Arbuthnott, Hawkins, Russell, Clavell, Sheridan, Bungham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Michell, Mansell, Grant, Acland, Williams, Helyar
LOFTUS	BASTARD	Davis, Fox-Lane, Meyrick, Beckford, Rivers, Cholmondley, Seymer, Pitt
MICHEL	HELYAR	King, Wyndham, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Pinney, Wingfield-Digby, Smith, Templer, Arbuthnott, Hawkins, Russell, Clavell, Sheridan, Bungham, Pleydell, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Michell, Mansell, Grant, Acland, Williams, Digby, Strangways
PLEYDELL	RICHARDS	King, Wyndham, Frampton, Haines, Mansel, Markland, Tregonwell, Portman, Monro, Goodden, Wentworth, Gould, Pinney, Wingfield-Digby, Smith, Templer, Arbuthnott, Hawkins, Russell, Clavell, Sheridan, Bungham, Damer, Fane, Hodges, Frome, Still, Michell, Mansell, Grant, Acland, Williams, Helyar, Digby, Strangways

### Sources

The data on membership of the Commission of the Peace are taken from sources held at the Dorset County record Office:

QSM 1/11 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1783-1797.  
 QSM 1/12 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1798-1806.  
 QSM 1/13 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1806-1812.  
 QSM 1/14 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1812-1819.  
 QSM 1/15 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1819-1826.  
 QSM 1/16 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1827-1836.

The data on university attendance and occupations are taken from the following:

F. Boase, *Modern English Biography*, 6 vols (1965).  
 DNB, 21 vols, (eds) L. Stepehen and S. Lee (1917).  
 J. Hutchins, *The History of the Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, 4 vols (Blandford 1773, 1874 edn).  
*Register of the University of Oxford*, (ed.) C. W. Boase, 5 vols (Oxford, 1885-1889).  
*The Victoria History of the County of Dorset*, 3 vols, (ed.), W. Page (1908).  
*The Victoria History of the County of Somerset*, 6 vols (ed.), W. Page (1911).

APPENDIX B

*The Commission of the Peace*

Table B1.1: *Dorchester petty session division*

Parish Pre1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes Removed 1829
Abbotsbury	Bincombe	Chelborough East
Athelhampton	Compton Abbas	Chelborough West
Bradford Peverell	Compton Valence	Chilcombe
Broadmayne	Dewlish	Dalwood
Broadwey	Frampton	Frome St Quintin
Buckland Ripers	Longbredy	Hermitage
Burleston	Owermoigne	Milborne St Andrew
Charminster	Poxwell	Stockwood
Chelborough East	Warmwell	
Chelborough West	Winterborne Abbas	
Chickerell West	Winterborne Came (Part)	
Chilcombe	Woodsford	
Chilfrome		
Dalwood		
Dorchester		
Evershot		
Fleet		
Fordington		
Frome St Quintin		
Frome Vauchurch		
Hermitage		
Kingston Russell		
Knighton, West		
Langton Herring		
Little Bredy		
Litton Cheney		
Maiden Newton		
Melbury Sampford		
Melcombe Regis		
Milborne St Andrew		
Osmington		
Piddlehinton		
Portisham		
Portland		
Preston & Sutton Poyntz		
Puddletown		
Puncknowle		
Radipole		
Rampisham		
Stafford, West		
Stinsford		
Stockwood		
Stratton		
Swyre		
Tincleton		
Toller Fratum		
Toller Porcorum		
Tolpuddle		
Upway		
Weymouth		
Whitcombe		
Winterborne Came (part)		
Winterborne Faringdon		
Winterborne Herringstone		



Table B1.1: *Cont.*

Winterborne Monkton		
Winterborne St Martin		
Winterborne Steepleton		
Wyke Regis		
Wynford Eagle		

Table B1.2: *Cerne petty session division*

Parish Pre 1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Alton Pancras	Batcombe	Compton Abbas
Buckland Newton	Frome St Quintin	Hawkchurch (part)
Cattistock	Hermitage	Hilton
Cerne Abbas	Melbury Bubb	Ibberton
Cerne, Nether	Up-Cerne	Milton Abbas
Cheselbourne	Woolcombe & Newland	Stoke Wake
Compton Abbas		Wooland
Godmanstone		
Hawkchurch (part)		
Hillfield		
Hilton		
Ibberton		
Mappowder		
Melcombe Horseye		
Milton Abbas		
Minterne Magna		
Piddletrenthide		
Pulham		
Stoke Wake		
Sydling St Nicholas		
Wooland		

Table B1.3: *Bridport petty session division*

Parishes pre-1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Allington	Dalwood	Bincombe
Askerswell	Halstock	Compton Valence
Beaminster	Hawkchurch	Frampton
Bettiscombe		Long Bredy
Bincombe		Winterborne Abbas
Bothemhampton		Winterborne Came
Bradpole		
Bridport		
Broadwinsor		
Burstock		
Burton Bradstock		
Catherstone Lewestone		
Chardstock		
Charmouth		
Cheddington		
Chideock		
Compton Valence		
Corscombe		
Frampton		
Hooke		
Little Winsor		
Loders		
Long Bredy		
Lyme Regis		
Mapperton		
Marshwood		
Melplash		
Mosterton		
Netherbury		
North & South Poorton		
Pilsdon		
Poorstock		

Table B1.3: *Cont.*

Shipton Gorge		
South Perrott		
Stanton St Gabriel		
Stockland		
Stoke Abbas		
Symondsbury		
Walditch		
Wambrook		
Whitchurch Canonicorum		
Winterborne Abbas		
Winterborne Came (part)		
Winterborne Whitchurch		
Wooton Fitzpaine		
Wraxall		

Table B1.4: *Sherborne petty session division*

Parishes pre-1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Batcombe	Chelborough East	Batcombe
Bere Hackett	Chelborough West	Halstock
Bishop Caundle	Stockwood	Lydlinch
Bradford Abbas		Melbury Bubb
Castleton		Up-Cerne
Caundle Marsh		
Caundle Purse		
Chetnole		
Clifton Maybank		
Folke		
Halstock		
Haydon		
Holnest		
Leigh		
Lillington		
Longburton		
Lydlinch		
Melbury Bubb		
Melbury Osmund		
Nether Compton		
North Wooton		
Oborne		
Over Compton		
Ryme Intrinsic		
Sherborne		
Thornford		
Up-Cerne		
Yetminster		

Table B1.5: *Sturminster petty session division*

Parishes pre-1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Buckhorn Weston	Bellchallwell	Buckhorn Weston
Caundle Wake	Fifehead Neville	Kington Magna
Child Okeford	Hammoon	Margaret marsh
Fifehead Magdalen	Hazlebury Bryan	Silton
Hanford	Ibberton	Stour Provost
Hinton St Mary	Lydlinch	Stower East
Iwerne Courtney	Shillingstone	Stower West
Kington Magna	Stoke Wake	Sutton Waldron
Manston	Wooland	Todber
Margaret Marsh		
Marnhull		
Okeford Fitzpaine		
Silton		
Stalbridge		
Stock Gayland		
Stour Provost		



Table B1.5: *Cont.*

Stower East		
Stower West		
Stourton Caundle		
Sturminster Newton		
Sutton Waldron		
Todber		
Thornhill		

Table B1.6: *Shaftesbury West (renamed Shaftesbury in 1829) petty session division*

Parishes pre-1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Ashmore	Buckhorn Weston	Bellchallwell
Bellchallwell	Kington Magna	Shillingstone
Bourton	Margaret Marsh	Tarrant Gunville
Cann	Silton	Tollard Farnham
Compton Abbas	Stour Provost	Turnworth
Fotmell Magna	Stower East	
Gillingham	Stower West	
Iwerne Minster	Sutton Waldron	
Melbury Abbas	Todber	
Motcombe		
Orchard East		
Orchard West		
Shaston Holy Trinity		
Shaston St James		
Shaston St Peter		
Shillingstone		
Tarrant Gunville		
Tollard Farnham		
Turnworth		

Table B1.7: *Shaftesbury Easy (renamed Wimborne in 1829) petty session division*

Parishes pre-1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Almer & Mapperton	None	Charlton Marshall
Canford Magna		Chettle
Chalbury		Spetisbury
Charlton Marshall		Tarrant Monkton
Chettle		
Corfe Mullen		
Cranborne		
East & West Morden		
Edmonsham		
Gussage All Saints		
Gussage St Michael		
Hampreston		
Hamworthy		
Handley		
Hinton Martell		
Hinton Parva		
Horton		
Kinson		
Long Crichell		
Longfleet		
Lytchett Matravers		
Lytchett Minster		
Moor Crichell		
Parkstone		
Pentridge		
Shapwick		
Spetisbury		
Sturminster Marshall		
Tarrant Crawford		
Tarrant Monkton		
Tarrant Rushton		
West Parley		

Table B1.7: *Cont.*

West Woodyates		
Wimborne		
Wimborne St Giles		
Witchampton		
Woodlands		

Table B1.8: *Blandford North (renamed Blandford in 1829) petty session division*

Parishes pre-1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Anderson	Charlton Marshall	Bloxworth
Blandford Forum	Chettle	Dewlish
Blandford St Mary	Spetisbury	Fifehead Neville
Bloxworth	Tarrant Gunville	Hammoon
Bryanston	Tarrant Monkton	Hazlebury Bryan
Durweston	Milborne St Andrew	
Dewlish	Turnworth	
Fifehead Neville		
Hammoon		
Hazlebury Bryan		
Langton Long		
Pimperne		
Steepleton Preston		
Stourpaine		
Tarrant Hinton		
Tarrant Keynestone		
Tarrant Launcestone		
Tarrant Rawstone		
Thomson		
Winterborne Clenstone		
Winterborne Houghton		
Winterborne Stickland		
Winterborne Whitchurch		
Winterborne Zelstone		

Table B1.9: *Blandford South (renamed Wareham in 1829) petty session division*

Parishes pre 1829	Parishes added 1829	Parishes removed 1829
Affpuddle	Bloxworth	Owermoigne
Arne		Poxwell
Bere Regis		Warmwell
Bryants Puddle		Woodsford
Chaldon Herring		
Church Knowle		
Coombe Keynes		
Corfe Castle		
East Holme		
East Lulworth		
Kimmeridge		
Langton Matravers		
Moreton		
Owermoigne		
Poxwell		
Steeple		
Stoke East		
Studland		
Swanage		
Turners Puddle		
Tyneham		
Wareham		
Warmwell		
West Lulworth		
Winfrith		
Winterborne Kingstone		
Woodsford		
Wool		
Worth Matravers		



Table B2.1: Active magistrates at Shaftesbury East (Wimborne) petty sessions

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
Ashley C	Ashley C	Ashley C	Ashley C	
		Bankes H	Bankes H	Bankes H
			Bingham GR	
Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	
		Browne JH		
Calcraft J				
Chafin W	Chafin W			
Chapman A				
			Cox S	
			Donne H	
				Doughty E
	Dowland J			
Fane F				
		Frampton J		
		Garland G	Garland G	
			Garland JB	
		Glyn RC	Glyn RC	Glyn RC
		Goforth F		
		Greathead E		
				Hampden J
Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir
				Hanham W
		Hartwell H		
	Howe S			
King M	King M	King M	King M	King M
	King R	King R		
Lester BL				
Lester J	Lester J			
Meggs T				
Michel DR				
Milton Viscount				
			Monro HB	Monro HB
			Nepean MH	
			Okeden DOP	Okeden DOP
	Pickard T			
	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W
Richards J				
Strafford Earl				
Sturt C				
Tregonwell LDG	TregonwellLDG			
Willett R				

Table B2.2: Active magistrates at the Blandford South (Wareham) petty sessions

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
			Bain A	
			Bankes H	
			Bastard TH	
Browne JH				
Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	
				Calcraft JH
Chapman A				
		Clavell J		
Clavell W	Clavell W	Clavell W		
Cole W				
	Colson JM	Colson JM	Colson JM	
	Damer L			
Dampier J				
		England W		
			Farquharson JJ	
Fane F				
	Floyer W			
				Foster A
	Frampton J			
				Fyler S

Table B2.2: *Cont.*

	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	
Gould G				
King R				
Meggs T	Meggs T			
Michel DR				
				Pickard G jnr
Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	
Richards J	Richards J			
Richards W jnr				
Strafford Earl				
				Sturt HC

Table B2.3: *Active magistrates at Sturminster petty sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
	Bastard J	Bastard J	Bastard J	
	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R
				Bower TB
				Bowles C
Brice GT				
Bristed N				
Burland JB	Burland JB			
	Douglas W			
		Grove WF	Grove WF	Grove WF
		Helyar J		
			Jacob GT	
Jones M				
LesterJ				
	Lo St E			
	Place H	Place H	Place H	
Salkeld W	Salkeld W			
		Seymer H	Seymer H	
	Simpson F			
Toogood W				
	Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	

Table B2.4: *Active magistrates at Blandford North (Blandford) petty sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
		Bastard TH	Bastard TH	Bastard TH
Brice GT				
Bristed N				
Burland JB				
Chafin W	Chafin W			
Chapman A				
	Dowland J	Dowland J		
Fane F	Fane F			
				Farquharson JJ
	Grosvenor RED			
	Howe S	Howe S	Howe S	
King R	King R			
Michel DR				
Milton Viscount				
			Pickard G jnr	
	Pickard T			
Pitt Morton W				
		Portman EB	Portman EB	Portman EB
Salkeld W				
	Simpson F			
				Smith JJ
		Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore
Strafford Earl				
Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG			



Table B2.5: *Active magistrates at Bridport petty sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	
			Browne JH	
				Coles JB
			Cox S	Cox S
				Dowland JJG
Drewe TR	Drewe TR	Drewe TR		
	England W	England W	England W	
	Floyer W			
Fox T				
Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	
		Goforth F	Goforth F	Goforth F
				Hardwicke TB
		Hartwell H		
				Hussey J
	Meggs T			
	Milton Viscount			
Munden J	Munden J	Munden J	Munden J	
	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	
			Nepean MH	Nepean MH
Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir
	Price AC			
Sherive H	Sherive H			
			Shute R	
			Steele R Sir	
			Synge E Sir	
				Weld H

Table B2.6: *Active magistrates at Cerne petty sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
	Blackmore R			
Bristed N				
	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	
				Colson JM
				Cox S
		Davis J	Davis J	Davis J
Drewe TR	Drewe TR			
		England W		
		Floyer W		
	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	
		Goforth F	Goforth J	
		Gould J		
Hutchings G				
Jones M	Jones M			
		Meggs T		
				Nepean E Sir
		Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	
		Phelips C		
			Seymer H	
	Simpson F			
				Smith JJ
Toogood W	Toogood W			
		Venables J	Venables J	Venables J
			White J	

Table B2.7: Active magistrates at Shaftesbury West (Shaftesbury) petty sessions

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R
		Bower TB	Bower TB	Bower TB
				Bowles C
Bristed N				
	Burland JB			
Chafin W				
		Dowland J		
		Grove WF	Grove WF	Grove WF
Lester J				
Milton Viscount				
				Salkeld R
	Salkeld W			
	Simpson F	Simpson F		
Strafford Earl				

Table B2.8: Active magistrates at Dorchester petty sessions

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
	Arbuthnott J			
			Barker WA	
	Browne FJ	Browne FJ		
Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	
				Churchill WRH
	Colson JM	Colson JM	Colson JM	
				Dade T
		Dowland J		
Drewe TR				
		England W	England W	England W
Fane F				
	Floyer W	Floyer W		
				Foster A
				Frampton H
Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J
			Goforth F	
Gould G				
	Gould J	Gould J		
Meggs T	Meggs T	Meggs T		
Michel DR				
Milton Viscount	Milton Viscount			
Munden J	Munden J	Munden J		
			Murray E	Murray E
Oglander W Sir				
Payne S				
		Phelips C		
		Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W
Richards J				
				Seymer HK
Sherive H				
Steward F				
Steward GT	Steward GT	Steward GT	Steward GT	Steward GT
				Templer JA
		Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB

Table B2.9: Active magistrates at Sherborne petty sessions

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
Bristed N				
Burland JB	Burland JB			
		Davis J		
		Digby C		



Table B2.9: *Cont.*

		Foster A		
		Goforth F		
				Goodden J
		Hartwell H		
Hutchings G				
Jones M	Jones M	Jones M		
		Munden J		
		Parsons J	Parsons J	Parsons J
		Phelips C		
				Pretor S
Salkeld W	Salkeld W			
Toogood W	Toogood W			
		West EW	West EW	
			White J	

Table B3.1: *Number of petty session divisions in which each magistrate was active*

	1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
Arbuthnott J		1			
Ashley C	1	1	1	1	
Bain A				1	
Bankes H			1	2	1
Barker WA				1	
Bastard J			1		
Bastard TH			1	2	2
Bingham GR				1	
Blackmore R		3	2	2	2
Bower TB			1	1	2
Bowles C					2
Brice GT	3	1	1	1	
Bristed N	3				
Browne FJ	1	2	2		
Browne JH	2	2	3	3	1
Burland JB	3	3			
Calcraft J	2	1	1	1	
Calcraft JH					1
Chafin W	3	2			
Chapman A	3				
Churchill WRH					1
Clavell J			1		
Clavell W	1	1	1		
Cole W	1				
Coles JB					1
Colson JM		1	2	2	1
Cox S				2	3
Dade T					1
Dampier J	1				
Davis J			2	1	1
Digby C			1		
Donne H				1	
Doughty E					1
Douglas W		1			
Dowland J		2	3		
Dowland JJG					1
Drewe TR	2	2	1		
England W			4	2	1
Fane F	4	1			
Farquharson JJ				1	1
Floyer W		3	2		
Foster A			1		2
Fox T	1				
Frampton H					1
Fyler S					1
Frampton J	1	2	3	2	1
Garland G			1	1	

Table B3.1: *Cont.*

Garland JB				1	
Glyn RC Sir			1	1	1
Goforth F			4	2	1
Goodden J					1
Gould G	2				
Gould J			2		
Greathead E			1		
Grosvenor RED		1			
Grove WF			2	2	2
Hampden J					1
Hanham J Sir	1	1	1	1	1
Hanham P					1
Hardwicke TB					1
Hartwell H			3		
Helyar J			1		
Howe S		2	1	1	
Hussey J					1
Hutchings G	2				
Hyde GH		1	1	1	
Jacob GT				1	
Jones M	3	2	1		
King M	1				
King R	2	2	1		
Lester BL	1				
Lester J	3	1			
Lo St E		1			
Meggs T	3	3	2		
Michel DR	4				
Milton Viscount	4	3			
Monro HB				1	1
Munden J	2	2	3	1	
Murray E				1	1
Nepean E Sir		1	1	1	1
Nepean MH				2	1
Oglander W Sir	2	1	2	1	1
Okeden DOP				1	1
Parsons J			1	1	1
Payne S	1				
Phelips C			3		
Pickard G jnr				1	1
Pickard T		2			
Pitt Morton W	2	2	3	3	2
Place H			1	1	
Portman EB			1	1	1
Pretor S					1
Price AC		1			
Richards J	3	1			
Richards W jnr	1				
Salkeld R					1
Salkeld W	3	3			
Seymer H			1	2	
Seymer HK					1
Sherive H	2	1			
Shute R				1	
Simpson F		4	1		
Smith JJ					2
Smith Wydebore			1	1	1
Steele R Sir				1	
Steward F	1				
Steward GT	1	1	1	1	1
Strafford Earl	3				
Sturt C	1				
Sturt HC				1	2
Synge E Sir				1	
Templer JA					1
Toogood W	3	2			



Table B3.1: *Cont.*

Tregonwell LDG	2	2			
Venables J			1	1	1
Weld H					1
West EW			1	1	
White J				2	
Willett R	1				
Wollastone CB				1	1
Yeatman HF		1	1	1	

Table B4.1: *Magistrates active only at petty sessions 1790-99*

	Occupations	University
Ashley C	Politics	Oxford
Calcraft J	Politics	
Chafin W	Church	
Cole W		
Dampier J	Church	Oxford
Fox T	Church	Oxford
Hanham J Sir	Church	Oxford
Hutchings G	Church	Cambridge
Jones M	Church	Oxford
King M	Church	Oxford
King R	Church	Oxford
Lester BL	Business	
Lester J	Business	
Viscount Milton	Politics	
Munden J	Church	Oxford
Oglander W Sir		Oxford
Payne S	Church	Oxford
Salkeld W		
Steward GT	Politics	
Strafford Earl (Wentworth)		
Sturt C	Politics	Cambridge
Tregonwell LDG		Oxford
Willett R		

B4.1.1: *Magistrates active only at quarter sessions 1790-99*

	Occupations	University
Brice GT	Church	Oxford
Bristed N	Church & Education	Cambridge
Browne FJ	Politics	
Browne JH		
Floyer W	Church	Oxford
Freke J	Church	Cambridge
Hutchings G	Church	Cambridge
Jones M	Church	Oxford
Phelips W	Church	Oxford
Pickard T		
Richards W	Church & Education	Oxford
Shaftesbury Earl		
Smith Wyldebore		Cambridge
White J	Lawyer	

Table B4.1.2: *Magistrates active at quarter and petty sessions 1790-99*

Quarter Sessions	Occupations	University
Chapman A		
Burland JB	Lawyer	Oxford
Clavell W	Lawyer	Cambridge
Drewe TR		
Fane F	Politics	Cambridge
Frampton J		Cambridge
Gould G		Oxford
Meggs T		
Michel DR	Army	Oxford

Table B4.1.2: *Cont.*

Pitt Morton W	Politics	Oxford
Richards W jnr		
Sherive H		Oxford
Steward F		
Toogood W	Business	Oxford

Table B4.2: *Magistrates active only at petty sessions 1800-09*

	Occupations	University
Arbuthnott J	Army	
Ashley C	Politics	Oxford
Bastard J	Church	Oxford
Blackmore R	Church	Oxford
Calcraft J	Politics	
Chafin W	Church	
Colson JM	Church	Oxford
Damer L	Politics	Cambridge
Douglas W	Church	Oxford
Gould J		
Grosvenor RED	Politics	Oxford
Hanham J Sir	Church	Oxford
Howe S	Church	Cambridge
Hyde GH	Church	Oxford
King M	Church	Oxford
King R	Church	Oxford
Lester J	Business	
Lo St E		
Milton Viscount	Politics	
Munden J	Church	Oxford
Nepean E Sir	Politics	
Oglander W Sir		Oxford
Price AC	Church	Oxford
Richards J	Church	Oxford
Salkeld W		
Steward GT	Politics	
Tregonwell LDG		Oxford
Yeatman HF	Church	Oxford

Table B4.2.1: *Magistrates active only at quarter sessions 1800-09*

	Occupation	University
Blackmore R	Church	Oxford
Bristed N	Church & Education	Cambridge
Drewe TR		
Gould G		Oxford
Howe S	Church	Cambridge
King R	Church	Oxford
Michel DR	Army	Oxford
Phelips W	Church	Oxford
Pitt W	Church	
Portman EB	Politics	Cambridge
Shaftesbury Earl	Politics	Oxford
Smith Wyldebore		Cambridge

Table B4.2.2: *Magistrates active at quarter and petty sessions 1800-09*

	Occupations	University
Brice GT	Church	Oxford
Browne FJ	Politics	
Browne JH		
Burland JB	Lawyer & Politics	Oxford
Clavell W	Lawyer	Cambridge
Dowland J	Church	Oxford
Drewe TR		
England W	Church	Cambridge
Fane F	Politics	Cambridge



Table B4.2.2: *Cont.*

Floyer W	Church	Oxford
Frampton J		Cambridge
Jones M	Church	Oxford
Meggs T		
Pickard T		
Pitt Morton W	Politics	Oxford
Place H	Church	Oxford
Sherive H	Church	Oxford
Simpson F	Church	Oxford
Toogood W	Business	Oxford

Table B4.3: *Magistrates active only at petty sessions 1810-19*

Petty Sessions	Occupations	University
Ashley C	Politics	Oxford
Calcraft J	Army	
Clavell J	Church	Cambridge
Colson JM	Church	Oxford
Digby C	Church	Oxford
Foster A	Army	
Garland G	Business	
Greathead E	Army	
Hanham J Sir	Church	Oxford
Hartwell H	Church	Oxford
Helyar J	Church	Oxford
Hyde GH	Church	Oxford
Jones M	Church	Oxford
King M	Church	Oxford
King R	Church	Oxford
Munden J	Church	Oxford
Nepean E Sir	Politics	Cambridge
Oglander W Sir		Oxford
Parsons J	Church	Oxford
Phelips C	Church	Oxford
Steward GT	Politics	

Table B4.3.1: *Magistrates active only at quarter sessions 1810-19*

	Occupation	University
Bristed N	Church & Education	Oxford
Farquharson JJ		Oxford
Gordon R	Politics	Oxford
Lester BL	Politics & Business	
Parsons J	Church	Oxford
Phelips W	Church	Oxford
Pickard T		
Pitt W	Church	
Portman EB	Politics	Cambridge
Shaftesbury Earl	Politics	Oxford
Toogood W	Business	Oxford
Venables J	Church	Oxford
Williams R	Banking	Oxford

Table B4.3.2: *Magistrates active at quarter and petty sessions 1810-19*

	Occupations	University
Bankes H	Politics	Cambridge
Bastard J	Church	Oxford
Bastard TH		Oxford
Blackmore R	Church	Oxford
Bower TB		
Brice GT	Church	Oxford
Browne FJ		
Browne JH		
Clavell W	Lawyer	Cambridge
Davis J	Church	Oxford

Table B4.3.2: *Cont.*

Dowland J	Church	Oxford
Drewe TR		
England W	Church	Cambridge
Floyer W	Church	Oxford
Frampton J		Cambridge
Glyn RC Sir	Banking	
Goforth F	Church	Cambridge
Grove WF	Church	Oxford
Howe S	Church	Cambridge
Meggs T		
Pitt Morton W	Politics	Oxford
Place H	Church	Oxford
Seymer H		Oxford
Simpson F	Church	Oxford
Smith Wyldebore		Cambridge
West EW	Church	Oxford
Wollastone CB	Lawyer	Cambridge
Yeatman HF	Church	Oxford

Table B4.4: *Magistrates active only at petty sessions 1820-29*

	Occupations	University
Bain A	Medicine	
Barker WA	Church	
Bingham GR	Army	
Calcraft J		
Colson JM	Church	Oxford
Cox S	Business	Oxford
Garland G	Business	
Garland JB	Business	
Hanham J Sir	Church	
Hyde GH	Church	Oxford
King M	Church	Oxford
Monro HB		
Munden J	Church	Oxford
Nepean E Sir	Lawyer	Cambridge
Oglander W Sir		Oxford
Shute R		
Steward GT	Banker	
Synge E Sir		Oxford
White J	Lawyer	

Table B4.4.1: *Magistrates active only at quarter sessions 1820-29*

	Occupations	University
Gordon R	Politics	Oxford
Jones M	Church	Oxford
Lester BL	Business & Politics	
Phelips W	Church	Oxford
Pickard T		
Pitt W	Church	
Salkeld R	Church	Oxford
Simpson F	Church	Oxford
Smith JJ		Cambridge
Strangways HF	Church	Oxford
Williams R	Banker	Oxford

Table B4.4.2: *Magistrates active at quarter and petty sessions 1820-29*

	Occupations	University
Bankes H	Politics	Cambridge
Bastard J	Church	Oxford
Bastard TH		Oxford
Blackmore R	Church	Oxford
Bower TB		
Brice GT	Church	Oxford



Table B4.4.2: *Cont.*

Browne FJ		
Browne JH		
Davis J	Church	Oxford
Donne H	Church	Oxford
England W	Church	Cambridge
Farquharson JJ		Oxford
Frampton J		Cambridge
Glyn RC Sir	Banking	
Goforth F	Church	Cambridge
Grove WF	Church	Oxford
Howe S	Church	Cambridge
Jacob GT	Army	Oxford
Murray E	Church	Cambridge
Nepean MH	Lawyer	Cambridge
Okeden DOP		Cambridge
Parsons J	Church	Oxford
Pickard G jnr	Church	Oxford
Pitt Morton W	Politics	Oxford
Place H	Church	Oxford
Portman EB	Politics	Cambridge
Seymer H		Oxford
Shaftesbury Earl	Politics	Oxford
Smith Wyldebore		Cambridge
Steele R Sir		
Venables J	Church	Oxford
West EW	Church	Oxford
Wollastone CB	Lawyer	Cambridge
Yeatman HF	Church	Oxford

Table B4.5: *Magistrates active only at petty sessions 1830-35*

	Occupations	University
Bayley H	Army	
Blackmore R	Church	Oxford
Calcraft JH	Politics	Oxford
Coles JB		
Colson JM	Church	Oxford
Doughty E		
Glyn RC Sir	Banking	
Grove WF	Church	Oxford
Hampden J	Church	Oxford
Hanham J Sir	Church	Oxford
Hanham W		
Hardwicke TB		Oxford
Irving M	Church	Oxford
King M	Church	Oxford
Monro HB		
Nepean E Sir	Lawyer	Cambridge
Oglander W Sir		Oxford
Okeden DOP		Cambridge
Palmer W	Church	
Smith Wyldebore		

Table B4.5.1: *Magistrates active only at quarter sessions 1830-35*

	Occupation	University
Acland AHD	Lawyer	Oxford
Bankes G	Politics	Cambridge
Bankes WJ	Politics	Cambridge
Bastard J	Church	Oxford
Best S	Church	Cambridge
Brouncker R		Oxford
Browne FJ		
Browne JH		
Cree J		
Damer GLD	Army & Politics	

B4.5.1: *Cont.*

Digby H		
Digby CW		Cambridge
Farquharson JJ jnr		Oxford
Floyer J		Oxford
Gordon R	Politics	Oxford
Grosvenor Earl	Politics	Oxford
Hanham W		
Harris JG	Lawyer	Cambridge
Howard TP	Army	
Jacob GT	Army	Oxford
Lester BL	Business & Politics	
Manning CA	Army	
Mansel J	Army	
Okeden DOP		Cambridge
Peach G		
Pickatd T		
Pitt W	Church	
Seymer H		Oxford
Shaftesbury Earl	Politics	Oxford
Smith Wyldebore		Cambridge
Steward RAT	Civil Service	
Strangways JGCF	Politics	Cambridge
Weld E		
Weld H		
Williams R jnr	Banking	Oxford

Table B4.5.2: *Magistrates active at quarter and petty sessions 1830-35*

	Occupations	University
Bankes H		Cambridge
Bastard TH		Oxford
Bower TB		
Bowles C	Church	
Bragge W	Army	Oxford
Churchill WRH	Church	Oxford
Cox S	Business	Oxford
Dade T	Church	Cambridge
Davis J	Church	Oxford
Dowland JIG	Church	Oxford
England W	Church	Cambridge
Farquharson JJ		Oxford
Foster A	Army	
Frampton H		Cambridge
Frampton J		Cambridge
Fyler JC		Oxford
Goforth F	Church	Cambridge
Gooden J	Lawyer	Oxford
Gundry SB	Business	
Hussey J	Lawyer	
Murray E	Church	Cambridge
Nepean MH	Lawyer	Cambridge
Pickard G jnr	Church	
Pitt Morton W		Oxford
Portman EB	Politics	Cambridge
Pretor S	Banker	
Salkeld R	Church	Oxford
Seymer HK	Politics	Oxford
Smith JJ		Cambridge
Steward GT	Banker	
Sturt HC	Politics	Oxford
Templer JA	Church	Oxford
Venables J	Church	Oxford
Wollastone CB	Lawyer	Cambridge



Table B5.1: Occupations and backgrounds of active magistrates 1790-1835

1790-1800	Army & Navy	Civil Service	Politics	Church	Law	Business	Bank	Education	Doctor	None
Petty Sessions	0	0	5	10	0	2	0	0	0	6
Quarter Sessions	1	0	3	8	3	1	0	2	0	12
1800-09										
Petty Sessions	1	0	7	14	0	1	0	0	0	6
Quarter Sessions	1	0	6	14	2	1	0	1	0	8
1810-19										
Petty Sessions	3	0	3	13	0	1	0	0	0	1
Quarter Sessions	0	0	6	19	2	2	2	1	0	11
1820-29										
Petty Sessions	1	0	0	6	2	3	1	0	1	5
Quarter Sessions	1	0	6	22	2	1	2	0	0	12
1830-35										
Petty Sessions	1	0	1	8	1	0	1	0	0	8
Quarter Sessions	7	1	11	15	6	3	3	0	0	26
Grand Total	16	1	48	129	18	15	9	4	1	95

Table B6.1: University attendance of magistrates active only at petty sessions

	Oxford	Cambridge	None
1790-99	11	2	11
1800-09	16	2	11
1810-19	14	2	5
1820-29	7	1	8
1830-35	10	2	11
Totals	58	9	46

Table B6.1.1: University attendance of magistrates active only at quarter sessions

	Oxford	Cambridge	None
1790-99	6	4	4
1800-09	6	4	3
1810-19	4	1	3
1820-29	8	1	3
1830-35	12	8	16
Totals	36	18	29

Table B6.1.2: University attendance of magistrates active at quarter and petty sessions

	Oxford	Cambridge	None
1790-99	6	3	5
1800-09	10	4	5
1810-19	14	8	6
1820-29	18	11	5
1830-35	15	10	8
Totals	63	36	29

Table B7.1: More active magistrates at Blandford quarter sessions

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendance
		Bankes H	Bankes H	14
		Bastard TH	Bastard TH	10
		Bower TB	Bower TB	10
Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	26
Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	25
Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	28
	Dowland J	Dowland J	Dowland J	31
	England W	England W	England W	12
Fane F	Fane F			10
		Farquharson JJ	Farquharson JJ	11

Table B7.1: *Cont.*

Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	37
Grosvenor RED	Grosvenor RED	Grosvenor RED		11
	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	19
	Howe S	Howe S	Howe S	33
Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	23
	King R	King R		18
Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	32
Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	33
	Place H	Place H	Place H	13
	Portman EB	Portman EB	Portman EB	27
	Schuyler F	Schuyler F		11
		Seymer H	Seymer H	17
Shaftesbury Earl	Shaftesbury Earl	Shaftesbury Earl	Shaftesbury Earl	12
	Simpson F	Simpson F	Simpson F	20
Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	14
Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	26
		Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	13

Table B7.1.1: *Less active magistrates at Blandford quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendance
Arbuthnott J	Arbuthnott J			1
Bain A	Bain A	Bain A		4
		Bastard J	Bastard J	8
			Bingham GR Sir	2
	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	5
			Bond J	1
Bristed N	Bristed N	Bristed N		6
Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	4
			Calcraft JH	1
Chafin W	Chafin W			1
Chapman A				3
			Clavell J	1
Clavell W	Clavell W	Clavell W		8
Damer L	Damer L			8
	Dampier J			1
		Davis J	Davis J	3
		Digby C	Digby C	2
	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	2
			Digby R	1
		Donne H	Donne H	4
Drewe TR	Drewe TR	Drewe TR		1
		Garland G	Garland G	4
		Glyn RC Sir	Glyn RC Sir	4
		Goforth F	Goforth F	8
		Gordon R	Gordon R	3
		Greathead E		1
		Grove WF	Grove WF	5
		Hartwell H		3
	Helyar J	Helyar J	Helyar J	2
			Jacob GT	2
Jeffrey J	Jeffrey J			5
Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	3
			King WM	2
		Lester BL	Lester BL	6
Lester L	Lester J			6
Meggs T	Meggs T	Meggs T		6
Michel DR	Michel DR			6
			Monro HB	2
			Murray E	2
	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	2
			Nepean MH	1
Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	3
			Okeden DOP	3
		Parsons J	Parsons J	3
	Penfold GS	Penfold GS		2



Table B7.1.1: *Cont.*

		Phelips J	Phelips J	3
Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	9
			Pickard G jnr	1
	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	8
Richards W jnr				1
Richards WP	Richards WP			1
Salkeld W	Salkeld W			2
Sherive H	Sherive H			6
	St Lo E	St Lo E	St Lo E	3
			Steele R Sir	2
Strafford Earl				6
			Strangways HF	3
Sturt C	Sturt C			1
			Sturt HC	1
Toogood W	Toogood W	Toogood W		6
		Venables J	Venables J	1
		West EW	West EW	3
White J				2
Willett JW				1
		Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB	7

Table B7.2: *More active magistrates at Sherborne quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendance
Bristed N	Bristed N	Bristed N		28
Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	15
Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	17
	Dowland J	Dowland J	Dowland J	12
Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	11
	Howe S	Howe S	Howe S	11
Hutchings G				15
Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	39
	King R	King R		10
Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	12
Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	19
Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	28
Toogood W	Toogood W	Toogood W		42

Table B7.2.1: *Less active magistrates at Sherborne quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendances
Arbuthnott J	Arbuthnott J			2
Bain A	Bain A	Bain A		1
		Bastard J	Bastard J	3
		Bastard TH	Bastard TH	4
	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	3
		Bower TB	Bower TB	6
Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	3
Clavell W	Clavell W	Clavell W		4
		Colson JM	Colson JM	1
		Davis J	Davis J	3
		Digby C	Digby C	3
	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	2
			Digby H	6
	England W	England W	England W	7
Fane F	Fane F			2
		Farquharson JJ	Farquharson JJ	6
Fox T				1
		Goforth F	Goforth F	9
		Goodforde J	Goodforde J	4
Gould G	Gould G			7
	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	2
		Hartwell F Sir		1
		Hartwell H		1
		Hawkins S		1
	Helyar J	Helyar J	Helyar J	1



Table B7.2.1: *Cont.*

Hoare RC Sir	Hoare RC Sir	Hoare RC Sir	Hoare RC Sir	1
Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	1
Michel DR	Michel DR			3
			Monro HB	1
Munden J	Munden J	Munden J		2
	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	1
Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	1
			Okeden DOP	1
		Parsons J	Parsons J	9
	Penfold GS	Penfold GS		1
		Phelips J	Phelips J	1
	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	1
	Place H	Place H	Place H	2
	Portman EB	Portman EB	Portman EB	8
Richards WP	Richards WP			1
Salkeld W	Salkeld W			1
	Schuyler F	Schuyler F		1
		Seymer H	Seymer H	8
Sherive H	Sherive H			5
	Simpson F	Simpson F	Simpson F	8
Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	2
	St Lo E	St Lo E	St Lo E	1
			Strangways HF	2
			Synge R Sir	2
Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	2
		Venables J	Venables J	5
		West EW	West EW	9
White J				1
Willett JW				1
		Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB	6
		Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	9

Table B7.3: *More active magistrates at Shaftesbury quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendances
	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	22
Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	12
Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	21
Chapman A				6
	Dowland J	Dowland J	Dowland J	17
Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	17
	Howe S	Howe S	Howe S	18
	King R	King R		10
Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	15
Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	20
Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	28
	Simpson F	Simpson F	Simpson F	17
Toogood W	Toogood W	Toogood W		19

Table B7.3.1: *Less active magistrates at Shaftesbury quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendances
		Bankes H	Bankes H	5
		Bastard J	Bastard J	5
		Bastard TH	Bastard TH	3
			Bingham GR Sir	1
		Bower TB	Bower TB	7
Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	8
Burland JB	Burland JB			1
Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	2
Chafin W	Chafin W			1
			Clavell J	1
Clavell W	Clavell W	Clavell W		2
Damer L	Damer L			5
		Davis J	Davis J	1
		Digby C	Digby C	2



Table B7.3.1: *Cont.*

		Digby H	Digby H	1
		Donne H	Donne H	7
	Douglas W			1
	England W	England W	England W	1
Fane F	Fane F			1
		Farquharson JJ	Farquharson JJ	5
Fox T				1
Freke J				3
		Garland G	Garland G	2
			Garland JB	1
		Glyn RC Sir	Glyn RC Sir	5
			Glyn RP Sir	1
		Goforth F	Goforth F	3
		Gordon R	Gordon R	1
	Grove T			2
		Grove WF	Grove WF	8
	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	7
	Helyar J	Helyar J	Helyar J	4
Hoare RC Sir	Hoare RC Sir	Hoare RC Sir	Hoare RC Sir	1
Hutchings G				3
Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	1
Jeffrey J	Jeffrey J			3
Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	8
		Lester BL	Lester BL	1
Lester L	Lester J			3
Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	1
Meggs T	Meggs T	Meggs T		6
Michel DR	Michel DR			2
			Monro HB	1
	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	1
Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	1
			Okeden DOP	1
		Parsons J	Parsons J	5
			Pickard G jnr	1
	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	5
	Place H	Place H	Place H	8
	Portman EB	Portman EB	Portman EB	9
Salkeld W	Salkeld W			1
	Schuyler F	Schuyler F		1
		Seymer H	Seymer H	8
Sherive H	Sherive H			6
Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	8
	St Lo E	St Lo E	St Lo E	1
			Steele R Sir	2
Steward F				2
Strafford Earl	Strafford Earl			1
Sturt C	Sturt C			1
Talbot H				1
Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	5
	Tucker W	Tucker W	Tucker W	1
		West EW	West EW	2
White J				5
		Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB	6
		Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	8

Table B7.4: *More active magistrates at Briport quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendance
Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	31
Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	29
	Dowland J	Dowland J	Dowland J	12
Drewe TR	Drewe TR	Drewe TR		23
Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	25
	Howe S	Howe S	Howe S	13
Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	11
Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	21



Table B7.4: *Cont.*

Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	23
	Portman EB	Portman EB	Portman EB	15
Sherive H	Sherive H			11
Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	16
Toogood W	Toogood W	Toogood W		10

Table B7.4.1: *Less active magistrates at Briport quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-25	Attendance
Arbuthnott J	Arbuthnott J			1
		Bankes H	Bankes H	8
		Bastard J	Bastard J	1
		Bastard TH	Bastard TH	1
		Bower TB	Bower TB	1
Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	3
Burland JB	Burland JB			1
Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	9
Clavell W	Clavell W	Clavell W		4
Damer L	Damer L			7
	Deane J			1
	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	1
		Disney J		2
	England W	England W	England W	6
Fane F	Fane F			
		Farquharson JJ	Farquharson JJ	1
Floyer W	Floyer W	Floyer W		1
		Goforth F	Goforth F	6
Gould G	Gould G			3
Grosvenor RED	Grosvenor RED	Grosvenor RED		1
	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	1
		Hartwell H		1
Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	1
Jeffrey J	Jeffrey J			4
Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	4
Knight JF				1
Meggs T	Meggs T	Meggs T		2
Michel DR	Michel DR			5
Munden J	Munden J	Munden J		8
	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	6
			Nepean MH	2
			Okeden DOP	1
	Penfold GS	Penfold GS		2
	Penn J			1
		Phelips J	Phelips J	1
Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	9
	Pine AC			1
	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	1
	Price A			1
Richards W jnr				2
Richards WP	Richards WP			2
	Schuyler F	Schuyler F		3
		Seymer H	Seymer H	4
Shaftesbury Earl	Shaftesbury Earl	Shaftesbury Earl	Shaftesbury Earl	2
	Simpson F	Simpson F	Simpson F	3
Smith J Sir	Smith J Sir	Smith J Sir		3
	St Lo E	St Lo E	St Lo E	1
			Steele R Sir	2
			Strangway C	1
			Synge E Sir	1
Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	1
	Tucker W	Tucker W	Tucker W	2
		West EW	West EW	1
Willett JW				1
		Williams R	Williams R	7
		Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB	6
		Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	3



Table B7.5: *More active magistrates at Dorchester quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35	Attendance
		Bankes H	Bankes H	Bankes H	29
				Bankes WJ	10
		Bastard J	Bastard J	Bastard J	13
		Bastard TH	Bastard TH	Bastard TH	15
				Best S	6
				Boucher W	14
		Bower TB	Bower TB	Bower TB	88
				Bowles C	6
				Brouncker R	14
Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	Browne FJ	108
Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	Browne JH	120
				Curchill WRH	23
		Davis J	Davis J	Davis J	21
				Digby H	5
	Dowland J	Dowland J	Dowland J		13
				Dowland JYG	11
	England W	England W	England W	England W	105
Fane F	Fane F				12
		Farquharson JJ	Farquharson JJ	Farquharson JJ	68
Floyer W	Floyer W	Floyer W			30
				Foster A	66
				Frampton H	78
Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	Frampton J	238
				Fyler JC	31
		Goforth F	Goforth F	Goforth F	29
				Gooden J	29
		Gordon R	Gordon R	Gordon R	21
				Hanham W	13
				Harris JG	3
				Hussey J	5
			Jacob GT	Jacob GT	38
		Lester BL	Lester BL	Lester BL	16
				Loftus GC	23
				Manning CA	4
Meggs T	Meggs T	Meggs T			99
Michel DR	Michel DR				31
			Murray E	Murray E	45
			Nepean MH	Nepean MH	2
			Okeden DOP	Okeden DOP	33
			Pickard G jnr	Pickard G jnr	32
Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	Pickard T	22
	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	16
Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	Pitt Morton W	155
	Portman EB	Portman EB	Portman EB	Portman EB	29
				Pretor S	8
Richards W					4
Richards W jnr					8
			Salkeld R	Salkeld R	12
		Seymer H	Seymer H	Seymer H	14
				Seymer HK	11
Shaftesbury Lord	Shaftesbury Lord	Shaftesbury Lord	Shaftesbury Lord	Shaftesbury Lord	50
Sherive H	Sherive H				9
			Smith JJ	Smith JJ	26
Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	Smith Wyldebore	28
			Steele R Sir		10
Steward F					6
				Steward GT	9
			Strangways HF		12
			Sturt HC	Sturt HC	29
				Templer JA	12
Toogood W	Toogood W	Toogood W			26
		Venables J	Venables J	Venables J	11
				Weld H	16
White J					19
		Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB	Wollastone CB	136



Table B7.5: *Cont.*

		Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	Yeatman HF	32
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Table B7.5.1: *Less active magistrates at Dorchester quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35	Attendance
Arbuthnott J	Arbuthnott J				5
Bain A	Bain A	Bain A	Bain A		7
				Bankes G	5
			Barker WA		3
			Bingham GR Sir		2
	Blackmore R	Blackmore R	Blackmore R		1
Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT	Brice GT		3
Bristed N	Bristed N	Bristed N			3
Burland JB	Burland JB				5
Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J	Calcraft J		4
			Calcraft JH	Calcraft JH	12
Clavell W	Clavell W	Clavell W			13
		Colson JM	Colson JM	Colson JM	13
				Cooper AA	9
				Cox S	5
				Dade T	3
		Digby C	Digby C		2
	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	Digby Earl	5
				Digby CW	1
		Donne H	Donne H		1
				Doughty E	7
Drewe TR	Drewe TR	Drewe TR			2
				Farquharson JJ jnr	2
Freke J					2
				Fryer CG	4
		Garland G	Garland G		2
			Garland JB	Garland JB	5
		Glyn RC Sir	Glyn RC Sir	Glyn RC Sir	8
				Grant C Sir	1
		Greathead E			1
Grosvenor RED	Grosvenor RED	Grosvenor RED			1
		Grove WF	Grove WF	Grove WF	9
				Hampden J	3
	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir	Hanham J Sir		1
				Hanham P	5
				Hardwicke TB	1
		Hartwell H			2
	Helyar J	Helyar J	Helyar J		1
	How S	How S	How S		1
Hutchings G					1
Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH	Hyde GH		2
Jeffrey J	Jeffrey J				3
Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M		3
	King R	King R			2
			King WM	King WM	2
Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	Medlycott WC Sir	5
			Monro HB	Monro HB	6
Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir	Nepean E Sir		3
			Nepean MH	Nepean MH	2
Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	Oglander W Sir	10
		Parsons J	Parsons J	Parsons J	17
Payne S					1
Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W	Phelips W		13
				Pinney W	4
	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	Pitt W	16
				Ponsonby WFS	4
Purling J					2
Richards J					3
Richards WP	Richards WP				2
Salkeld W	Salkeld W				3
	Schulyer F	Schulyer F			2



Table B7.5.1: *Cont.*

	Simpson F	Simpson F	Simpson		1
				Smith HC	1
Smith J Sir	Smith J Sir	Smith J Sir			1
Strafford Earl					1
			Strangways C		1
			Synge E Sir		1
				Templer GH	2
Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG	Tregonwell LDG		3
Tucker W	Tucker W	Tucker W	Tucker W	Tucker W	2
		West EW	West EW	West EW	2
		Williams R	Williams R		6
				Williams R jnr	3
				Yeatman HF jnr	3

Table B8.1: *Membership of Committee for Public (County) Accounts*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
L Damer	Missing	Missing	T.B. Bower	Missing
F.J. Browne			F.J. Browne	
D.R. Michel			D.O.P. Okeden	
W.Richards				
W.Salkeld				
W. Toogood				
G Gould				
F. Steward				

Table B8.2: *Membership of Committee to Examine Treasurers Accounts*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
W Toogood	Missing	Missing	T.B. Bower	Missing
J Frampton			J. Frampton	
J.H. Browne			E.B. Portman	
J Calcraft			W.M. Pitt	
J Jeffrey			J.J. Farquharson	

Table B8.3: *Membership of Committee to Examine Gaol Accounts*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
W Toogood	W. Toogood	J. Frampton		Missing
W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	
T Meggs		F.J. Browne	T.B. Bower	
J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne		
J. Jeffrey				

Table B8.4: *Membership of County Bridges Committee*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
	Sir J. Hanham	Missing	Sir W. Oglander	Missing
	J.W. Willett		F. Goforth	
	C. Sturt		W.M. Pitt	
	J. Lester		J.Frampton	
	R. King		J. Davis	
	G. T Brice		J. Venables	
H. Sherive	H. Sherive		J.White	
W. Toogood	W. Toogood		Rev C. Digby	
F.J. Browne	F.J. Browne		G.T. Jacob	
W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt		H.F. Yeatman	
J.B. Burland	J.B. Burland		J. Bastard	
W. Salkeld	W.Salkeld		T.B. Bower	
J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne		Rev. W.F. Grove	
			E.B. Portman	
			J.J. Farquharson	
			T.H. Bastard	
			Sir J. Hanham	
			Sir R.C. Glyn	
			H. Bankes	
			J. Calcraft	

Table B8.4: *Cont.*

			A Bain	
			D.O.P. Okeden	
			S. Cox	
			J. Bond	

Table B8.5: *Membership of Building Committee*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
Missing	J.B. Burland	Missing	Sir W. Oglander	Missing
	J.W. Willett		F. Goforth	
	W.M. Pitt		W.M. Pitt	
	J. Lester		J.Frampton	
	R. King		J. Davis	
	G. T Brice		J. Venables	
	H Sherive		J.White	
	W.Toogood		Rev C. Digby	
	F.J. Browne		G.T. Jacob	
	W. Salkeld		H.F. Yeatman	
	J. H. Browne		J. Bastard	
	C Sturt		T.B. Bower	
			Rev. W.F. Grove	
			E.B. Portman	
			J.J. Farquharson	
			T.H. Bastard	
	Sir J. Hanham		Sir J. Hanham	
			Sir R.C. Glyn	
			H. Bankes	
			J. Calcraft	
			A Bain	
			D.O.P. Okeden	

Table B8.6: *Membership of Finance Committee*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
Missing	Missing	Missing	E.B. Portman	E.B. Portman
			D.O.P Okeden	D.O.P Okeden
			W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt
			J.J. Farquharson	J.J. Farquharson
			T.B. Bower	T.B. Bower
			E Murray	E. Murray
			B.L. Lester	B.L. Lester
			H. Bankes	
				H.C. Sturt
				G.T. Jacob
				Rev J.A. Templar
				Hon. W.F.S. Ponsonby

Table B9.1: *Cross Membership of Committees*

1790-99	Public	Treasurer's	Gaol	Bridge	Building	Finance
	W. Toogood	W. Toogood	W. Toogood	W. Toogood	No Data	No Data
		J.Jeffrey	J.Jeffrey			
	F.J. Browne			F.J. Browne		
			W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt		
	W.Salkeld			W. Salkeld		
		J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne		
1800-09	No Data	No Data	W. Toogod	W. Toogood	W. Toogood	No Data
			W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	
			J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	
				Sir J. Hanham	Sir J. Hanham	
				J.W. Willett	J.W. Willett	
				C. Sturt	C. Sturt	
				J. Lester	J. Lester	
				R. King	R. King	
				G.T. Brice	G.T. Brice	



Table B9.1: Cont.

				H. Sherive	H. Sherive	
				F.J. Browne	F.J. Browne	
				J.B. Burland	J.B. Burland	
				W. Salkeld	W. Salkeld	
1810-19	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
1820-29	T.B. Bower	T.B. Bower	T.B. Bower	T.B. Bower		T.B. Bower
	D.O.P. Okeden			D.O.P. Okeden		D.O.P. Okeden
		J. Frampton		J. Frampton		
		E.B. Portman				E.B. Portman
		W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt		W.M. Pitt
		J.J. Farquharson		J.J. Farquharson		J.J. Farquharson
				Sir W. Oglander	Sir W. Oglander	
				F. Goforth	F. Goforth	
				J. Davis	J. Davis	
				J. Venables	J. Venables	
				C. Digby	C. Digby	
				J. White	J. White	
				G.T. Jacob	G.T. Jacob	
				H.F. Yeatman	H.F. Yeatman	
				J. Bastard	J. Bastard	
				W.F. Grove	W.F. Grove	
				T.H. Bastard	T.H. Bastard	
				Sir J. Hanham	Sir J. Hanham	
				Sir R.C. Glyn	Sir R.C. Glyn	
				H. Bankes	H. Bankes	H. Bankes
				J. Calcrafft	J. Calcrafft	
				A. Bain	A. Bain	
1830-35	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data

Table B10.1: *Most active magistrates at Petty Sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	183-36
G.T. Brice				Insufficient data
N. Bristed				
J.B. Burland	J.B. Burland			
W. Chafin				
A. Chapman				
T.R. Drewew				
F.fane				
M. Jones				
J. Lester				
T. Meggs	T. Meggs			
D.R. Michel				
Viscount Milton				
W. Salkeld	W. Salkeld			
Earl Strafford				
W. Toogood				
	R Blackmore			
	W. Floyer			
	J. Frampton	J. Frampton	J. Frampton	
	F Simpson			
		J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	
		J. Dowland		
		W. England		
		F. Goforth	F. Goforth	
		H. Hartwell		
		J. Munden		
		C. Phelips		
		W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	

Table B10.2: *Most active magistrates at quarter sessions*

1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
F.J. Browne	F.J. Browne	F.J. Browne	F.J. Browne	F.J. Browne
J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne	J.H. Browne



Table B10.2: *Cont.*

J. Frampton	J. Frampton	J. Frampton	J. Frampton	J. Frampton
T. Pickard	T. Pickard	T. Pickard	T. Pickard	
W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt	W.M. Pitt
	J. Dowland	J. Dowland	J. Dowland	
	W. England	W. England	W. England	
	S. Howe	S. Howe	S. Howe	
	E.B. Portman	E.B. Portmna	E.B. Portman	
		J.J. Farquharson	J.J. Farquharson	J.J. Farquharson
		H. Seymer	H. Seymer	
		H. F Yeatman	H.F. Yeatman	
				A.H.D. Acland
				G. Bankes
				T.B. Bower
				J. Cree
				G.L.D. Damer
				H. Frampton
				J.C. Fyler
				J. Goodden
				G.T. Jacob
				G.C. Loftus
				C.A. Manning
				H. Weld
				R.Williams jnr
				C.B. Wollastone
				H.F. Yeatman jnr

**Note on the Sources**

The tables above are derived from the following manuscript minutes and printed reports and accounts held at the Dorset County Record Office. Most of the reports and statements have not, as yet, been assigned record office call-numbers. The following printed items are catalogued in *Cox's Index To The County Records*, shelved in the County Record Office search room:

*Proceedings and Reports of the Bridge and Building Committees*, vol. i, 1826-1865.  
*Notebooks of the Chairman of the Bridge and Building Committees*, vol. i, 1833-37; vol ii 1838-1842.  
*County Accounts and County Treasurers Accounts*, vol.ii 1777-1806; vol.iii, 1806-25.  
*Abstracts in two volumes of the County Accounts*, 1835-1838  
*Annual Statement of Accounts*, vol. I, 1789-1808; vol. ii, 1808-1841.  
*Minutes of the Finance Committee*, 1827-1863.  
*Reports on The County Accounts in Three Volumes.*

The tables are also derived from Quarter Session Order Books and approximately one thousand settlement and removal documents covering sixty parishes that are held at the Dorset County Record Office. Removals, examinations and certificates were agreed, conducted and issued by magistrates at petty sessions. Removal orders were signed by two magistrates and settlement examinations and certificates were also invariably signed by an examining magistrate. It is the signatures on these documents that provide the means to calculate the activity of different magistrates at the separate petty sessions. It would be too cumbersome to repeat the call-numbers of each document here and the reader's attention is drawn to the parish lists in the bibliography. The Order Book references are:

QSM 1/11 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1783-1797.  
QSM 1/12 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1798-1806.  
QSM 1/13 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1806-1812.  
QSM 1/14 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1812-1819.  
QSM 1/15 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1819-1826.  
QSM 1/16 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1827-1836.

The data on university attendance and occupations are taken from the following:

F. Boase, *Modern English Biography*, 6 vols (1965).  
*DNB*, 21 vols, (eds) L. Stepehen and S. Lee (1917).  
J. Hutchins, *The History of the Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, 4 vols (Blandford 1773, 1874 edn).  
*Register of the University of Oxford*, (ed.) C. W. Boase, 5 vols (Oxford, 1885-1889).  
*The Victoria History of the County of Dorset*, 3 vols, (ed.), W. Page (1908).  
*The Victoria History of the County of Somerset*, 6 vols (ed.), W. Page (1911).



APPENDIX C

*The Poor Laws*

Table C1.1: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03.*

	i <sup>2</sup>	ii <sup>2</sup>	iii <sup>2</sup>	iv <sup>3</sup>	v	vi <sup>4</sup>	vii <sup>5</sup>	viii <sup>6</sup>	ix	x
Division						%			%	%
Blandford North	416	311	46	245	1016	15.2	156	860	84.6	4.5
Blandford South	655	472	4	416	1547	13.4	332	1215	78.5	0.3
Bridport	965	668	339	859	2831	13.1	318	2513	88.8	12.0
Cerne	319	248	16	264	847	14.0	105	742	87.6	2.0
Dorchester	747	656	89	566	2058	10.5	480	1578	76.7	4.3
Shaston East	909	743	99	1066	2817	18.0	419	2298	81.6	3.5
Shaston West	630	585	35	396	1646	17.2	248	1398	85.5	2.1
Sherborne	370	220	98	283	971	10.7	190	781	80.4	10.1
Sturminster	406	420	125	290	1241	15.2	73	1168	94.1	10.1
Dorset	5417	4323	851	4385	14974	13.0	2321	12553	83.8	5.7
England	97325	104197	25432	102351	329305	16.1	43991	285314	86.6	7.7

Table C1.2: *Abstract of returns 1802-03: Shaftesbury West Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish									%	
Ashmore	10	2		11	23	16.3	5	18	78.3	
Belchalwell	8	4		8	20	14.9	6	14	70.0	
Cann	15	3		14	32	15.8	6	26	81.3	
Compton Abbas	22	12		34	68	18.3	13	55	80.9	
Farnham	6			8	14	15.9	6	8	57.1	
Fontmell Magna	34	21		23	78	12.0	21	57	85.3	
Gillingham	149	276	24	50	499	26.4	51	448	89.8	4.8
Bourton	15	63		13	91	14.3	25	66	72.5	
Iwerne Minster	38	9	11	23	81	16.3	18	63	77.8	13.6
Melbury Abbas	15	1		4	20	6.6	10	10	50.0	
Motcombe	68	44		40	152	16.6	8	144	94.7	
East Orchard	10	14		3	27	16.3		27	100.0	
West Orchard	9	7		8	24	20.0		24	100.0	
Shillingstone	13			6	19	5.0		19	100.0	
Tarrant Gunville	15	5		11	31	7.6	8	23	63.9	
Farnham	13	13		25	51	29.3	1	50	98.0	
Turnworth	6				6	7.3		6	100.0	
Shaftesbury										
St James	34	29		45	108	17.6		108	100.0	
St Peter	73	45		26	144	16.1	40	104	72.2	
Holy Trinity	77	37		44	158	17.1	30	128	81.0	
Total	630	585	35	396	1646	17.2	248	1398	85.5	2.1

Table C1.3: *Abstract of returns for 1802-03: Sturminster Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish						%			%	
Buckhorn Weston	27	16		15	58	18.9	10	48	82.8	
Child Okeford	22	22		26	70	14.1	11	59	84.3	
F. Magdalen	12	1		3	16	6.7	10	6	37.5	
Hinton St Mary	18	18		6	42	15.8		42	100.0	
Iwerne Courtenay	27	7	16	6	56	13.3		56	100.0	28.6
Kington Magna	9	10		24	43	10.4	5	38	88.4	
Manston	6	4		1	11	10.1		11	100.0	
Marnhull	27	32	39	37	135	12.6		135	100.0	28.9
Margaret Marsh	1				1	1.5	1			
Okeford Fitzpaine	24	7		7	38	8.0	7	31	81.6	
Silton	17	21		18	56	16.4	7	49	87.5	



Table C1.3: *Cont.*

Stalbridge	47	38	22	8	115	9.2	2	113	98.3	19.1
Stock Gayland	3	3		5	11	15.5	2	9	81.8	
Stourton Candle	24	25		2	51	18.4		51	100.0	
East Stour	3	3		85	91	23.9	9	82	90.1	
Stour Provost	22	22		10	54	8.9		54	100.0	
West Stour	7			9	16	12.1	6	10	62.5	
Sturminster Newton	93	170	48	20	331	23.5		331	100.0	14.5
Sutton Waldron	10	19		6	35	18.6	1	34	97.1	
Todber	7	2		2	11	15.1	2	9	81.8	
Total	406	420	125	290	1241	15.2	73	1168	94.1	10.1

Table C1.4: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03: Cerne Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish						%			%	%
Alton Pancras	8	4		3	15	8.2	2	13	86.7	
Buckland Newton	24	24		20	68	10.4		68	100.0	
Cattistock	14	2		14	30	8.6	14	16	53.3	
Cerne Abbas	25	21	16	13	75	8.9	11	64	85.3	21.3
Nether Cerne	1				1	2.0		1	100.0	
Cheselborne	10	11		9	30	11.2		30	100.0	
Compton Abbas	2			1	3	5.9		3	100.0	
Godmanstone	9	1		2	12	9.4	6	6	50.0	
Hilton	27	26		19	72	15.6	2	70	97.2	
Ibberton	14	12		58	84	53.5	4	80	95.2	
Mappowder	15	2		11	28	12.2	9	19	67.9	
Melcombe Horseye	7	2			9	7.6	7	2	22.2	
Milton Abbas	25	31		13	69	12.7	3	66	95.7	
Minterne Magna	25	25		7	57	17.6	8	49	86.0	
Piddletrenthide	15				15	3.3	9	6	40.0	
Pulham	14	11		14	39	20.5	4	35	89.7	
Stoke Wake	9	4		4	17	20.0	6	11	64.7	
Sydling St Nicholas	18	11		4	33	7.2	6	27	81.8	
Hilfield	10	18		13	41	42.3	2	39	95.1	
Wooland	17	18		50	85	69.1		85	100.0	
Wooton Glanville	30	25		9	64	23.3	12	52	81.3	
Total	319	248	16	264	847	14.0	105	742	87.6	1.9

Table C1.5: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03: Bridport Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish						%			%	%
Allington	19	20		24	63	8.8	1	62	98.4	
Askerswell	3	-		5	8	4.7	3	5	62.5	
Beaminster	57	60	107	86	310	14.5	12	298	96.1	34.5
Bettiscombe	5	6		4	15	31.9	2	13	86.7	
Bincombe	5	2		5	12	9.3	1	11	91.7	
Bothenhampton	4	11		7	22	6.6	6	16	72.7	
Bradpole	11	18		17	46	8.0		46	100.0	
Broadwinsor	57	64	58	16	195	17.8	8	187	95.9	29.7
Burstock	60	12		34	106	61.6	14	92	86.8	
Burton Bradstock	27	34		13	74	11.3	1	73	98.6	
Catherstone Lewestone		2			2	10.0		2	100.0	
Chardstock	21	24	41	147	233	21.3	23	210	90.1	17.6
Charmouth	7	5		18	30	8.1		30	100.0	
Cheddington	8	29		6	43	93.5		43	100.0	
Chideock	17	18		8	43	7.4	15	28	65.1	
Compton Valence	4	1			5	7.2	4	1	20.0	
Corscombe	30	33		26	89	17.3		89	100.0	
Frampton	15	7		6	28	9.5	5	23	82.1	
Hooke	7	2		8	17	9.2	4	13	76.5	
Loders	11	15		13	39	6.0	2	37	94.9	



Table C1.5: *Cont.*

Long Bredy	17	9		8	34	14.1	1	33	97.1	
Mapperton	6	5		3	14	19.4		14	100.0	
Marshwood	9	19		39	67	14.9	1	66	98.5	
Mosterton	20	10		12	42	19.1	3	39	92.9	
Netherbury	52	79	56	36	223	14.8	24	199	89.2	25.1
South Perrott	13	20		6	39	15.5	3	36	92.3	
Pilsdon	21	9		2	32	26.2		32	100.0	
North Poorton	5	1		4	10	13.3	4	6	60.0	
Powerstock	54	9		12	75	9.4	34	41	54.7	
Shipton Gorge	4			5	9	4.1	5	4	44.4	
Stanton St Gabriel	4	3		9	16	16.0	2	14	87.5	
Stoke Abbot	29	15		11	55	11.3	15	40	72.7	
Symondsburry	22	14		21	57	7.2	16	41	71.9	
Walditch	4	6		30	40	29.9		40	100.0	
Wambrook	15	12		8	35	25.4	4	31	88.6	
Whitchurch Canonorum	64	31		22	117	12.6	28	89	76.1	
Winterborne Abbas	10	3	2		15	9.6	5	10	66.7	13.3
Wooton Fitzpaine	33	7		10	50	14.1	15	35	70.0	
Wraxall	6				6	11.1		6	100.0	
Bridport	160	18	75	155	408	13.4	44	374	89.5	18.4
Lyme Regis	49	35		23	107	7.4	23	84	78.5	
Total	965	668	339	859	2831	13.1	318	2513	88.8	12.0

Table C1.6: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03: Sherborne Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish									%	%
Batcombe	7	10		17	34	21.9	3	31	91.2	
Beer Hackett	4	1		7	12	13.8	1	11	91.7	
Bradford Abbas	16			4	20	4.2	11	9	45.0	
Castleton	8	6		10	24	19.2	4	20	83.3	
Bishops Candle	15	8		9	32	11.3	3	29	90.6	
Marsh Candle	2			4	6	13.0	1	5	83.3	
Clifton Mabank	5			2	7	17.5	2	5	71.4	
Nether Compton	19	2		17	38	10.2	10	28	73.7	
Over Compton	8	1		2	11	8.1	6	5	45.5	
Folke	9	1		4	14	7.7	4	10	71.4	
Halstock	14	29		15	58	14.6	15	43	74.1	
Haydon	1	1			2	2.4	1	1	50.0	
Holnest	29	6		7	42	38.3	14	28	69.2	
Lewestone & Lillington	38	15		13	66	38.3	21	45	69.2	
Long Burton	5			33	38	17.6	5	33	86.8	
Lydlinch	17	2		6	25	10.0	5	20	80.0	
Melbury Bubb	9	6		6	21	19.6	6	15	71.4	
Melbury Osmund	17	8	3	13	41	14.4	7	34	82.9	7.3
Oborne	5	2		8	15	11.4	3	12	80.0	
Purse Candle	13	9		7	29	19.6	3	26	89.7	
Ryme Intrinsica	6	14			20	16.3		20	100.0	
Thornford	10			2	12	4.7	3	9	75.0	
Up Cerne	2	2			4	2.7		4	100.0	
North Wooton	1	1		2	4	5.9	1	3	75.0	
Yetminster	12	10	6	26	54	11.3	9	45	83.3	11.1
Chetnole	8	8	6	6	28	16.7		28	100.0	21.4
Leigh	10	13	4	4	31	10.3	7	24	77.4	12.9
Sherborne	109	71	79	66	325	10.3	59	266	81.8	24.3
Total	370	220	98	283	971	10.7	190	781	80.4	10.1

Table C1.7: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03: Blandford South Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish						%			%	%
Affpuddle	5	20		15	40	11.6	17	23	57.5	
Arne	9	2		1	12	12.5	3	9	75.0	



Table C1.7: *Cont.*

Bere Regis	45	22		27	94	8.2	6	88	93.6	
Milborne Stileham	13	6		3	22	10.1	6	16	72.7	
Chaldon Herring	13	30		20	63	27.9	5	58	92.1	
Church Knowle	25	9			34	10.3	10	24	70.6	
Coombe Keynes	2	5		5	12	12.9	1	11	91.7	
Corfe Castle	76	34		82	192	14.3	42	150	78.1	
East Holme	4	8			12	40.0	2	10	83.3	
Kimmeridge	5			3	8	7.0	4	4	50.0	
Langton Matravers	43	26		21	90	17.8	26	65	71.4	
East Lulworth	25	20	1	3	49	13.5	8	41	83.7	2.0
West Lulworth	26	52		11	89	28.5	12	77	86.5	
Moreton	12	3		7	22	8.6	8	14	63.6	
Poxwell	1				1	1.5	1		100.0	
Owermoigne	11	10		1	22	10.2	4	18	81.8	
Steeple	15	5			20	9.7	10	10	50.0	
East Stoke	27	24		25	76	23.9	12	63	84.0	
Studland	16	26		12	54	16.3	8	46	85.2	
Swanage	87	23		56	166	12.0	57	109	65.7	
Turners Puddle	8	8		12	28	34.1	4	24	85.7	
Tyneham	10	3		4	17	9.1	4	13	76.5	
Warmwell	6	7		1	14	13.3	3	11	78.6	
Winfrith	27	26		10	63	11.1	10	53	84.1	
Winterborne Kingstone	20	14			34	10.1	10	24	70.6	
Woodsford	5	1		6	12	9.1	3	9	75.0	
Wool	24	12	3	15	54	14.1	16	38	70.4	5.6
Worth Matravers	13	13		13	39	18.0	22	17	43.6	
WAREHAM										
Lady St Mary	48	31		26	105	13.4	11	94	89.5	
St Martin	12	10		4	26	8.6	4	22	84.5	
Holy Trinity <sup>1</sup>	22	22		33	77	14.3	3	74	96.1	
Total	655	472	4	416	1547	13.4	332	1215	78.5	0.3

Table C1.8: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03: Shaftesbury East Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish						%			%	%
Almer	12	8		17	37	19.3	4	33	89.2	
Canford Magna	51	67		96	214	31.1	12	202	94.4	
Kinson	43	51		36	130	26.2	22	108	83.1	
Longfleet	8	6		12	26	5.2	5	21	80.8	
Parkstone	5	9	2	3	19	9.2	3	16	84.2	10.5
Chalbury	5	4		2	11	8.2	3	8	72.7	
Charlton Marshall	16	18		25	59	24.7	15	44	74.6	
Chettle	8	1		1	10	9.1	7	3	30.0	
Corfe Mullen	24	21			45	11.2	9	36	80.0	
Cranborne	75	70	46	100	291	20.6	20	171	58.8	15.8
Long Crichel	5			6	11	12.1	3	8	72.7	
More Crichel	20	8		15	43	16.0	7	36	83.7	
Edmonsham	20	13		10	43	24.0	11	32	77.4	
Gussage All Saints	29	34		18	81	26.9	5	76	93.8	
Gussage St Michael	20			7	27	13.8	20	7	25.9	
Hampreston	63	80		150	293	42.9	17	276	94.2	
Hamworthy	15	15		19	49	14.8	8	41	83.7	
Handley	45	53		30	128	16.9		128	100.0	
Hinton Martell	10	11		9	30	14.4	11	19	63.3	
Hinton Parva	1	2			3	9.1		3	100.0	
Horton	15	26		12	53	17.2	13	40	75.5	

<sup>1</sup> The 1801 return of population combined the totals of Holy Trinity Within and Holy Trinity Without. The 1803 poor returns for the separate parishes have also been combined.



Table C1.8: *Cont.*

Lytchett Matravers	24	8		40	72	17.3	23	49	68.1	
Lytchett Minster	4	3		4	11	2.2	3	8	72.7	
Morden	21	3		18	42	7.2	19	23	54.8	
West Parley	20	36		26	82	45.6	12	70	85.4	
Pentridge	12	10			22	9.2	5	17	77.3	
Shapwick	33	19		100	152	37.3	21	131	86.2	
Spetisbury	18	13		64	95	28.3	9	86	90.5	
Sturminster Marshall	40	54		27	121	17.8	15	106	87.6	
Tarrant Crawford	8				8	10.5	1	7	87.5	
Tarrant Monkton	17	9		26	52	25.1	4	48	92.3	
Tarrant Rushton	25	3		8	36	20.0	13	23	63.8	
Wimborne Minster	145	41	51	130	367	12.1	67	300	81.7	13.9
Wimborne St Giles	13			15	28	8.0	6	22	78.6	
Witchampton	15	6		25	46	12.3	14	32	69.6	
Woodlands	24	41		15	80	22.0	12	68	85.0	
Woodyates										
Total	909	743	99	1066	2817	18.0	419	2298	81.6	3.5

Table C1.9: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03: Blandford North Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish						%			%	%
Anderson <sup>2</sup>	7			6	13	13.4	2	11	84.6	
Blandford St Mary	15	7		5	27	9.24	12	15	55.6	
Bloxworth	11	1		3	15	8.2	10	5	33.3	
Bryanstone	18	8			26	26.3		26	100.0	
Dewlish	11	9		10	30	8.6	2	28	93.3	
Durwestone	13			17	30	9.0	13	17	56.7	
Fifehead Neville	5	4			9	12.5	1	8	88.9	
Hammoon	4				4	6.8	3	1	25.0	
Hazelbury Bryan	15	10		30	55	12.1	10	45	81.8	
Langton Long	7	7		7	21	29.2	4	17	81.0	
Pimperne	14	4		10	28	8.9	5	23	82.1	
Steepleton	4	2			6	33.3	1	5	83.3	
Stourpaine	27	14		32	73	19.2	17	56	76.7	
Tarrant Hinton	12	7		20	39	20.3	6	33	84.6	
Tarrant Keynestone	7	3		2	12	7.3	3	9	75.0	
Tarrant Launcestone	3			12	15	22.4	3	12	80.0	
Tarrant Rawstone	3	3		3	9	28.1		9	100.0	
Winterborne Clenstone <sup>3</sup>	17	34			51	104.1	5	46	90.2	
Winterborne Houghton	10	2		1	13	8.1	8	5	38.5	
Winterborne Stickland	12	12		3	27	8.8	9	18	66.7	
Winterborne Whitchurch	16	5		13	34	7.9	11	23	67.6	
Winterborne Zelstone	18	34		13	65	27.9	10	55	84.6	
Blandford Forum	160	145	46	54	405	17.4	21	384	94.8	11.4
Total	414	311	46	245	1016	15.2	156	860	84.6	4.5

<sup>2</sup> The 1801 return of population for Anderson included Winterborne Thomson. The 1803 poor law returns for Thomson have been included with those for Anderson.

<sup>3</sup> The total of those relieved as a percentage of the population of Winterborne Clenstone is greater than 100%. The inference may be that the parish officers returned a total of all paupers relieved and may not have made allowance for double-counting of individuals who obtained relief more than once in the year.



Table C1.10: *Abstract of Returns 1802-03: Dorchester Petty Session Division.*

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Parish						%			%	%
Abbotsbury	42	20		12	74	9.4	16	58	78.4	
Athelhampton	1	2			3	4.8	-	3	100.0	
Bradford Peverell	15	3		8	26	12.0	8	18	69.2	
Little Bredy	1	-			1	0.7	1			
Broadwey	9	18		6	33	14.3	3	30	90.9	
Broadmayne	11	4		5	20	6.0	7	13	65.0	
Buckland Ripers	5	5		3	13	21.0	1	12	92.3	
Burlestone										
Charminster	34	14		23	71	13.5	15	56	78.9	
East Chelborough	6	11		10	27	35.6	1	26	96.3	
West Chelborough	1	6		12	19	40.0	1	18	94.7	
West Chickerell	8			8	16	3.9	6	10	62.5	
Chilcombe				1	1	4.34		1	100.0	
Chilfrome	4	4		1	9	8.6	2	7	77.8	
Evershot	17	11		1	29	3.0	14	15	51.7	
Fleet	2	1		6	9	2.4	6	3	33.3	
Fordington	37	34		50	121	12.0	14	107	88.4	
Frome St Quintin	2	2		6	10	2.3	7	3	30.0	
Frome Vauxchurch	4				4	4.9	4			
Hawkchurch	42	22		43	107	9.3	34	63	58.9	
Hermitage	8	3		10	21	13.0	5	16	76.2	
Kingstone Russell	-	2			2	3.4		2	100.0	
West Knighton	3	2		25	30	15.0	3	27	90.0	
Langton Herring	6	-		1	7	1.3	5	2	28.6	
Litton Cheney	20	11		7	38	7.2	13	25	65.8	
Maiden Newton	16	13		9	38	5.6	14	24	63.1	
Melbury Sampford	5	15		2	22	23.2	3	19	86.4	
Milborne St Andrew	14	4		10	28	15.7	1	27	96.4	
Osmington	7	5		11	23	7.4	4	19	82.6	
Piddlehinton	9	5		12	26	7.6	6	20	76.9	
Puddletown	53	59		25	137	12.4	24	113	82.5	
Portesham	27	23		18	68	10.4	17	51	75.0	
Portland	35	29		7	71	3.1	21	50	70.4	
Preston	25	10		9	44	9.6	7	37	84.1	
Punknowle	13	12		4	29	7.9	8	21	72.4	
Radipole	6			5	11	4.6	4	7	63.6	
Rampisham	13	9		5	27	6.0	11	16	59.3	
West Stafford	6	5		23	34	20.1	5	29	85.3	
Stinsford	18	1		1	20	4.4	10	10	50.0	
Stockwood	6	6	1	2	15	26.8		15	100.0	6.7
Stratton	10	2			12	4.3	2	10	83.3	
Swyre	11			14	25	10.8	6	19	76.0	
Tincleton	2	7		47	56	43.4	3	53	94.6	
Toller Fratum	1				1	2.2		1	100.0	
Wynford Eagle	7				7	2.0	4	3	42.9	
Toller Porcorum	17	7		8	32	7.4	7	25	78.1	
Tolpuddle	31	15			46	9.7	19	27	58.7	
Upway	14	13		8	35	6.3	12	23	65.7	
Whitcombe	2	1		4	7	14.9		7	100.0	
Winterborne Came	2	3			5	6.02	2	3	60.0	
Winterborne Herringstone	2				2	6.9	2			
Winterborne Monkton	17	2		5	24	29.3	13	11	45.8	
Winterborne St Martin	4				4	1.5	4			
Winterborne Steepleton	10	8		1	19	13.3	3	16	84.2	
Wyke Regis	28	24		7	59	13.1	19	40	67.8	



Table C1.10: *Cont.*

DORCHESTER										
All Saints	36	29	19	25	109	17.4	8	101	92.7	17.4
Holy Trinity	44	59	37	8	148	15.4	17	131	88.5	25.0
St Peter	25	25	17	12	79	9.7	12	67	84.8	21.5
Melcombe Regis	40	64	16	28	148	6.3	36	112	75.7	10.8
Weymouth	23	26		22	71	5.6	10	61	85.9	
Total	747	656	89	566	2058	10.5	480	1578	76.7	4.3

*Key to Table headers*

- i. Number of adults permanently relieved outdoors.
- ii. Number of children permanently relieved outdoors.
- iii. Number of adults and children permanently relieved indoors.
- iv. Number relieved occasionally.
- v. Total relieved (cols i-iv).
- vi. Total relieved as percentage of population.
- vii. Number of non-able-bodied relieved.
- viii. Number of able-bodied adults and children.
- ix. Able-bodied as percentage of all paupers relieved.
- x. Permanent indoor paupers as percentage all paupers relieved.

*Notes to Table:*

- 1. These totals refer to agricultural counties (not including Dorset) and the classification follows P. Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959* (1962), p. 103.
- 2. Schedule question 10 inquired about ‘the number of persons relieved from the Poor’s Rate permanently throughout the year’. The answers give a total of the permanent indoor and outdoor ‘pensioners’ of the institution.
- 3. Schedule question 12 inquired: ‘What was the number of persons relieved occasionally in that year?’ Parishes may have returned either an average load figure or a total of all persons relieved and, in the last case, may or may not have made allowance for double-counting of individuals who obtained relief more than once in the year. The all persons total could be two or three times as large as the average load figure. There is no way of directly knowing what kinds of total were returned by the parishes. But there is internal evidence in the returns that the ambiguous question 12 was understood in one sense and that the returns give totals of one kind which are comparable. The significant point here is that the relation between numbers occasionally relieved (col. iv) and the total number of paupers (col. v) is remarkably consistent on a division by division basis. If we consider the nine petty session divisions in Dorset as a whole, then the occasionally relieved account for 29.3 percent of all persons relieved; and no fewer than seven of the nine divisions in this group have percentages in the range 24 percent to 31 percent.
- 4. Population totals are for the census year 1801.
- 5. These non-able-bodied persons are those defined by schedule question 13 as ‘above sixty years of age or disabled from labour by permanent illness or other infirmity’. Such individuals are included in the sub-totals in columns i-iv and the total in column v.
- 6. The total of able-bodied adults and dependent children has been calculated by subtracting the non-able-bodied in column vii from the all-persons total in column v.

Table C2.1: *Relief in Dorset to the low paid and underemployed in 1824.*

District <sup>4</sup>	Any Child Allowances	Wages Out Of Rates	Both Forms Of Relief	Neither
Blandford	yes	yes	yes	no
Dorchester	in some parishes	yes	yes	no
Shaftesbury	in some cases	no	no	no
Wareham	yes	in some parishes	yes	no

Table C2.2: *Relief in Dorset to the low paid and underemployed in 1832.*

Parish	Any Child Allowances	Wages Out Of Rates	Both Forms	Neither
BLANDFORD DISTRICT <sup>a</sup>				
Blandford	yes	yes	yes	no
Blandford St Mary	yes	no	no	no
Hazelbury Bryan	yes	yes	yes	no
Moreton	no	no	no	yes
Winterborne Kingstone	yes	no	no	no

<sup>4</sup> The 4 districts comprised 119 out of the 271 places in Dorset with responsibility for managing the poor.



Table C2.2: *Cont.*

CERNE DISTRICT <sup>b</sup>				
Cerne Abbas	yes	yes	yes	no
Buckland Newton	yes	yes	yes	no
DORCHESTER DISTRICT <sup>c</sup>				
Broadwey	yes	no	no	no
Rampisham	yes	no	no	no
SHAFTESBURY DISTRICT <sup>d</sup>				
Chettle	no	no	no	yes
Hampreston	yes	no	no	no
Longfleet	yes	no	no	no
More Crichel	no	no	no	yes
Parkstone	yes	no	no	no
Wimborne	no	no	no	yes
SHERBORNE DISTRICT <sup>e</sup>				
Sherborne	yes	no	no	no
STURMINSTER DISTRICT <sup>f</sup>				
Fontmell Magna	yes	no	no	no

*Notes to Table:*

<sup>a</sup> Blandford District comprised 30 parishes 4 of which made separate returns in 1832.

<sup>b</sup> Cerne District comprised 20 parishes.

<sup>c</sup> Dorchester District comprised 47 parishes.

<sup>d</sup> Shaftesbury District comprised 20 parishes.

<sup>e</sup> Sherborne District comprised 26 parishes.

<sup>f</sup> Sturminster District comprised 16 parishes.

Table C2.3: *Relief to the low paid and underemployed in Dorset in 1824 and 1832*

.	1824	1832
Number of districts providing returns <sup>i</sup>	4	6
Percentage giving any <sup>ii</sup> (a) child allowances <sup>iii</sup>	100	100
(b) wages out of rates <sup>iv</sup>	75	33.
Percentage giving (a) both forms of relief <sup>v</sup>	75	33.
(b) neither form of relief <sup>vi</sup>	0	33

*Notes to Table*

i. In both 1824 and 1832 , the parishes which replied to the questions were grouped into districts. Four districts returned replies for Dorset in 1824 plus the Borough of Dorchester. The replies to appropriate questions for the latter place are consonant with the replies for the District and have not been tabulated separately. In 1832 16 places representing 6 Districts and the District of Blandford made returns to the rural queries. Four of these places were part of the Blandford District, the remaining 12 places were distributed between the Districts of Dorchester, Cerne, Shaftesbury, Sturminster Newton and Sherborne.

ii. The totals for Dorset were produced by counting the number of places which answered ‘yes’ to a question about a specific relief practice. Two points should be noted about the definition of ‘yes’. ‘Yes’ does not imply that such relief was necessarily either usual or universal in the returning Districts (compare, for example, the replies from parishes in the same district in table). ‘Yes’ included attributed ‘yesses’ from places which did not directly answer ‘yes’ but, conceded, in a sentence or a few words describing the management of relief, that some relief in this form was in fact given.

iii. Replies to the following questions were tabulated.

(a) 1824 returns: ‘is it usual in your District for married labourers having children to receive assistance from the parish rate?’

(b) 1832 rural questions: ‘whether any allowance is made from the poor’s rate on account of large families?’

It is necessary to highlight two points about rural question number 24 in 1832. First, 3 sets of questions were circulated to parishes during 1832. Set one comprised 23 questions, Set two asked 32 questions and a third set of 3 additional queries was also circulated. Questions 10 and 12 from the first set asked respectively:

‘Have you any, and how many, able-bodied labourers in the employment of individuals receiving allowance or regular relief on their own account?’

‘Have you any and how many able-bodied labourers in the employ of individuals receiving allowance or regular relief on account of their families?’

Question 17 from the second set asked:



‘Have you any, and how many, able-bodied labourers in the employ of individuals receiving allowance or regular relief on their own account or on account of their families?’

Only replies to questions 10 and 12 of the first set were considered suitable to be tabulated. Answers to question 17 of the second set were not considered suitable to tabulate because the question would not elicit answers which could clearly discriminate between the payment of child allowances and payment of wages. Fortunately, only questions 10 and 12 of the first set of rural queries were answered by the responding parishes in Dorset. Second, no parish ever replied to the question 24 which was printed on a fold-out sheet as an aid to the reader of the relevant volume of parliamentary papers. This question read: ‘have you any, and how many, able-bodied labourers in the employment of individuals, receiving allowance or regular relief from your parish on their own account, or on that of their families?’. This was a composite of the three questions circulated in the first and second issues of the rural queries.

- iv. Replies to the following questions were tabulated.
- (a) 1824 returns: ‘Do any labourers in your District, employed by the farmers, receive either the whole or any part of the wages of their labour out of the poor rates?’ (question 1)
- (b) 1832 rural questions: ‘Have you any, and how many, able-bodied labourers in the employment of individuals receiving allowance or regular relief on their own account?’ (question 10, first set of rural queries). It is important to note that question 10 does not specifically mention the payment of wages. A number of the respondents did identify this practice, however, and I am assuming that question 10 was interpreted as asking for information on the payment of wages out of the rates. This tabulation should therefore be treated with caution. The information on the practice of paying wages out of the rates reliably covers only 1824.
- v. In 1824, 4 Districts admitted payment of wages out of the rates and each of these Districts also admitted paying child allowances. In 1832, parishes in the Blandford District and 2 parishes from the Cerne District admitted paying wages out of the rates and parishes in each of the responding 6 Districts also paid child allowances. Thus payment of wages out of the rates was an extra offered in 1824 by a large proportion of the Districts which made a return (and in 1832 by a much smaller proportion) of those paying child allowances. Payment of wages out of the rates was not something offered by a separate group of parishes distinct from those paying child allowances. We may speculate that the payment of wages out of the rates was an extra offered to single men or married men without children.
- vi. Four parishes from 2 Districts in 1832 categorically denied offering either type of relief.

Table C3.3: *The distribution of responding parishes by petty session division.*

Petty Session Division	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Division’s Population
Blandford North	26	100
Blandford South	2	6
Bridport	No return	No return
Cerne	2	31
Dorchester	2	2
Shaftesbury East	4	13
Shaftesbury West	1	6
Sherborne	1	43
Sturminster	1	6

Table C3.3.1: *Status of Respondents to the Rural Queries*

Division	Parish	Magistrate	Clergy	Overseer	Other
Blandford North	All parishes	1	1	4	1
Blandford South	Moreton	1			
	Winterborne Kingstone			1	
Bridport	No return				
Dorchester	Broadwey	1			
	Rampisham		1		
Cerne	Cerne Abbas	1			
	Buckland Newton	1			
Shaftesbury East	Hampreston	1			
	Longfleet			1	
	More Crichell	1			
	Parkstone			1	
Shaftesbury West	Fontmell Magna	1			
Sherborne	Sherborne				1
Struminster	Hazilbury Bryan		1		
Totals	42	8	3	7	2

Table C.4: *Reform of Settlement*<sup>5</sup>

Parish	Abolish	Marriage	Birth	Residence/Rent	Work
Moreton	Yes	No	No	No	No
More Crichell	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Winterborne Kingstone	No	No	Yes	No	No
Longfleet	No	No	Yes	No	No
Fontmell Magna	No	No	No	Yes	No
Broadwey	No	No	Yes	No	No
Hampreston	No	No	No	Yes	No
Sherborne	No	No	No	No	Yes
Blandford North Division	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

*Sources:*

*P.P.* Abstract of Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor (1803-04, XIII)  
K. Williams *From Pauperism to Poverty* (1981), p. 149.  
*P.P.*, 1832 Report of Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, Appendix B1 (pt. II), Appendix B2 (pt. III), Answers to Rural Queries (1834, XXXI).  
*P.P.*, S.C. Abstract of Returns on Labourers' Wages ( 1825, XIX).  
P. Deane and W.A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959* (1962), p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> Note on the data: David Parry Okeden, the respondent from Moor Crichel, believed that settlement should be based on either marriage, birth, residence or rental. The return from the Blandford North Division was completed by Edward Berkeley Portman and one of his principal tenants John Illott. Portman believed that settlement should be abolished and Ilott argued that a person's place of birth should decide a settlement.



APPENDIX D

*The Church and Religious Observance*

Table D1.1: *Shaftesbury West Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835.*

	Place	Denomination
1791	Shaftesbury	Catholic
1792	Gillingham	Methodist
1794	Fontmell Magna	Methodist
1794	Shaftesbury	Methodist
1796	East Stour	Methodist
1796	Motcombe	Methodist
1797	East Stour	Methodist
1798	West Orchard	Methodist
1798	Gillingham	Methodist
1799	Shaftesbury	Dissent
1801	Cann	Dissent
1807	Cann	Dissent
1811	Kington Magna	Dissent
1811	Iwerne Minster	Baptist
1811	Compton Abbas	Dissent
1811	Stour Provost	Dissent
1827	Ashmore	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Belchalwall	Wesleyan Methodist Circuit
1827	Buckhorn Weston	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Cann	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Compton Abbas	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Gillingham	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Melbury Abbas	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Motcombe	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Stour East	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Stour Provost	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1827	Shaftesbury	Primitive Methodist Circuit

Table D1.1.1: *Shaftesbury West total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	10	7
1800-10	2	1
1810-19	4	4
1820-29	11	4
1830-35	0	0

Table D1.2: *Blandford South Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835.*

	Place	Denomination
1791	East Lulworth	Catholic
1792	Wareham	Methodist
1793	East Lulworth	Catholic
1798	Wareham	Methodist
1798	Kingstone	Methodist
1799	Winfrieth	Dissent
1799	Studland	Dissent
1799	West Lulworth	Dissent
1799	Wareham	Dissent
1799	East Creech	Dissent
1799	Swanage	Dissent
1801	Langton Matravers	Dissent
1804	Bere Regis	Dissent
1808	Swanage	Dissent
1810	Corfe Castle	Dissent

Table D1.2: *Cont.*

1812	Bere Regis	Dissent
1812	East Stoke	Dissent
1813	Bere Regis	Dissent
1815	East Stoke	Dissent
1816	Kingstone	Dissent
1819	East Stoke	Independant
1820	Bere Regis	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Wareham	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Wool	Wesleyan Circuit
1829	Owermogne	Wesleyan Circuit
1829	Swanage	Wesleyan Circuit
1829	West Lulworth	Wesleyan Circuit
1829	Winfrith	Wesleyan Circuit

Table D2.1.1: *Blandford South total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	11	8
1800-09	3	3
1810-19	7	4
1820-29	7	2
1830-35	0	0

Table D1.3: *Shaftesbury East Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835.*

	Place	Denomination
1791	Stapehill	Catholic
1791	Hampreston	Catholic
1792	Canford Magna	Catholic
1792	Lytchett Matravers	Methodist
1792	Wimborne	Anabaptist
1794	Longham	Methodist
1798	West Morden	Methodist
1798	East Morden	Methodist
1798	Wimborne St Giles	Dissent
1799	Canford Magna	Dissent
1799	Horton	Dissent
1799	Gussage St Michael	Dissent
1799	Witchampton	Dissent
1799	Alderholt	Dissent
1799	West Morden	Dissent
1799	Cranborne	Dissent
1801	Longfleet	Catholic
1801	Woodlands	Dissent
1803	Canford Magna	Dissent
1806	Wimborne	Dissent
1806	Horton	Dissent
1808	Wimborne	Dissent
1808	Cranborne	Dissent
1809	Wimborne	Dissent
1810	Corfe Mullen	Dissent
1811	Witchampton	Dissent
1812	Lytchett Matravers	Dissent
1813	Wimborne	Dissent
1814	Holt	Dissent
1815	Horton	Dissent
1815	Corfe Mullen	Dissent
1817	Cranborne	Dissent
1817	Canford Magna	Dissent
1818	Holt	Dissent
1819	Longham	Dissent
1819	Hampreston	Dissent
1820	Corfe Mullen	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Cranborne	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1820	Cranborne	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Wimborne	Wesleyan Circuit



Table D1.3: *Cont.*

1820	Lytchett Matravers	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Sturminster Marshall	Wesleyan Circuit
1827	Farnham	Primitive Methodist Circuit

Table D1.3.1: *Shaftesbury East total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	16	14
1800-09	8	6
1810-19	12	10
1820-29	7	2
1830-35	0	0

Table D1.4: *Sturminster Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835*

	Place	Denomination
1791	Marnhull	Catholic
1793	Hazilbury Bryan	Methodist
1806	Okeford Fitzpaine	Dissent
1808	Sturminster Newton	Dissent
1810	Sturminster Newton	Dissent
1811	Stourton Candle	Dissent
1820	Sturminster Newton	Wesleyan Circuit
1827	Marnhull	Wesleyan Circuit

Table D1.4.1: *Sturminster total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	2	2
1800-08	2	2
1810-19	2	2
1820-29	2	0
1830-35	0	0

Table D1.5: *Blandford North Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835*

	Place	Denomination
1791	Steepleton Preston	Catholic
1791	Milton Abbas	Catholic
1792	Tarrant Monkton	Methodist
1792	Tarrant Hinton	Methodist
1793	Tarrant Monkton	Methodist
1794	Blandford Forum	Catholic
1799	Charlton Marshall	Dissent
1801	Stourpaine	Dissent
1801	Tarrant Hinton	Dissent
1807	Tarrant Monkton	Dissent
1809	Spetisbury	Dissent
1809	Blandford Forum	Dissent
1809	Pimperne	Dissent
1811	Tarrant Gunville	Dissent
1812	Stourpaine	Dissent
1815	Blandford Forum	Dissent
1820	Milton Abbas	Wesleyan Circuit
1829	Spetisbury	Roman Catholic
1829	Winterborne Clenstone	Wesleyan Circuit
1829	Winterborne Houghton	Wesleyan Circuit
1829	Winterborne Whitchurch	Wesleyan Circuit

Table D1.5.1: *Blandford North total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	7	6
1800-09	6	6
1810-19	3	3
1820-29	5	3
1830-35	0	0

Table D1.6: *Bridport Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835*

	Place	Denomination
1791	Chideock	Catholic
1791	Charmouth	Catholic
1791	Marshwood	Dissent
1796	Broadwinsor	Independant
1796	Chideock	Methodist
1796	Netherbury	Methodist
1797	Poorstock	Methodist
1797	Bradpole	Methodist
1798	Little Winsor	Methodist
1798	Stoke Abbas	Independant
1799	Bridport	Dissent
1799	Marshwood	Dissent
1799	Netherbury	Dissent
1800	Shipton Gorge	Dissent
1800	Dalwood	Dissent
1801	Netherbury	Dissent
1801	Burstock	Dissent
1801	Marshwood	Dissent
1801	Loders	Dissent
1801	Whitchurch Canonorum	Dissent
1801	Burton Bradstock	Dissent
1808	Bridport	Dissent
1808	Whitchurch Canonorum	Dissent
1809	Chideock	Dissent
1809	Bridport	Dissent
1812	Netherbury	Dissent
1813	Loders	Dissent
1814	Lyme Regis	Dissent
1814	Netherbury	Dissent
1815	Broadwinsor	Dissent
1816	Bincombe	Dissent
1816	Broadwinsor	Dissent
1818	Whitchurch Canonorum	Dissent
1818	Chardstock	Dissent
1820	Burton Bradstock	Dissent
1820	Chideock	Dissent
1821	Bothenhampton	Dissent
1824	Stockland	Dissent
1824	Chardstock	Dissent
1824	Netherbury	Dissent
1825	Chardstock	Dissent
1825	Stockland	Dissent
1825	Burton Bradstock	Dissent
1826	Chardstock	Dissent
1828	Whitchurch Canonorum	Dissent

Table D1.6.1: *Bridport total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	13	10
1800-09	12	10
1810-19	9	7
1820-29	11	7
1830-35	0	0

Table D1.7: *Sherborne Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835*

Year	Place	Denomination
1791	Thornford	Dissent
1793	Holnest	Methodist
1794	Sherborne	Methodist
1796	Sherborne	Methodist
1797	Nether Compton	Methodist
1798	Sherborne	Methodist
1800	Bradford Abbas	Dissent



Table D1.7: *Cont*

1804	Sherborne	Dissent
1817	Sherborne	Dissent
1817	Long Burton	Dissent
1817	Leigh	Dissent
1818	Long Burton	Dissent
1818	Leigh	Dissent
1818	Sherborne	Wesleyan Circuit
1819	Yetminster	Dissent
1819	Nether Compton	Dissent
1820	Haydon	Dissent
1821	Nether Compton	Dissent

Table D1.7.1: *Sherborne total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-1799	6	4
1800-09	2	2
1810-19	8	5
1820-29	2	2
1830-35	0	0

Table D1.8: *Dorchester Division licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835*

	Place	Denomination
1792	Portland	Methodist
1792	Weymouth	Methodist
1793	Weymouth	Methodist
1793	Portland	Methodist
1794	Upwey	Methodist
1797	Melcombe Regis	Methodist
1797	Wyke Regis	Methodist
1798	East Lulworth	Methodist
1798	Chilfrome	Methodist
1798	Maiden Newton	Methodist
1798	Frome Vauxchurch	Methodist
1799	Abbotsbury	Dissent
1799	Weymouth	Dissent
1799	Dorchester	Dissent
1799	Melcombe Regis	Dissent
1799	Wyke Regis	Dissent
1800	Rampisham	Dissent
1801	Swyre	Dissent
1804	Portland	Dissent
1804	Wyke Regis	Dissent
1806	Fordington	Dissent
1806	Melcombe Regis	Dissent
1807	Sutton Poyntz	Dissent
1808	Upwey	Dissent
1809	Hawkchurch	Dissent
1810	Tolpuddle	Dissent
1810	Upwey	Dissent
1811	Hawkchurch	Dissent
1813	Broadwey	Dissent
1813	Weymouth	Dissent
1816	Chickerell	Dissent
1818	Portland	Wesleyan Circuit
1818	Portland	Primitive Methodist Circuit
1820	Dorchester	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Broadwey	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Chickerell	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Chickerell	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Dewlish	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Kingstone Russell	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Preston	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Tincleton	Wesleyan Circuit
1820	Tolpuddle	Wesleyan Circuit

Table D1.8: *Cont.*

1822	Charminster	Dissent
1825	Hawkchurch	Dissent
1826	Hawkchurch	Dissent
1829	Weymouth	Wesleyan Circuit
1832	Winterborne St Martin	Independant

Table D1.8.1: *Dorchester total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	16	10
1800-09	9	9
1810-19	8	6
1820-29	12	2
1830-35	1	1

Table D1.9: *Cerne Division Methodist Circuits and licensed Dissenting places of worship including Roman Catholic chapels 1790-1835*

	Place	Denomination
1798	Cattistock	Methodist
1799	Pulham	Dissent
1800	Wooton Glanville	Dissent
1816	Piddletrenthide	Dissent
1819	Minterne Magna	Dissent
1820	Cerne Abbas	Dissent
1821	Minterne Magna	Dissent
1822	Minterne Magna	Dissent
1830	Cerne Abbas	Wesleyan Circuit
1830	Ibberton	Primitive Methodist Circuit

Table D1.9.1: *Cerne Division total of certificates, circuits and places*

Cerne	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of new Places
1790-99	2	2
1800-09	1	1
1810-19	2	2
1820-29	3	2
1830-35	2	2

Table D2.1: *County of Dorset total of certificates, circuits and places*

	Total of Certificates and Circuits	Total of New Places
1790-99	83	63
1800-09	45	25
1810-19	52	24
1820-29	18	5
1830-35	3	1

Table D3.1: *Distribution of Church patronage in Dorset 1790-1835*

Patron	Parish	Duration	Incumbent	Dates
Ashley-Cooper	Shaftesbury St Peters	1773->	Topham W	1773-1802
			Boucher J	1802-19
			Mayo J	1819-23
			Everard E	1823-25
			Pattinson W	1825->
	Shaftesbury St James	1773->	Templeman R	1773-97
			Bryer T	1797-1819
			Ricketts	1819-33
			Pattinson W	1833->
	Cann	1772->	Good H	1772-1800
			Churchill WRH	1800-06
			Wood G	1806->
	Hinton Martell	1781->	Huntingdon GI	1781-93
			Storey W	1793-97
			Pugh H	1797-1827
			Moone CF	1827-29



Table D3.1: *Cont.*

			Hampden J	1829->
	Wimborne St Giles	1791->	Sherive H	1791-4
			Talcot C	1794-1810
			Talbot Cjnr	1810-23
			Moore R	1823->
	Horton	1816->	Thompson J	1816->
	Edmonsham	1826-35	Robins J	1826-35
Bankes	Winterborne Thomson	1818->	Bankes E	1818-22
			Cambridge GP	1822->
	Corfe Castle	1799->	Bankes l'Anson	1799
			Bond W	1800-30
			Bankes E	1830->
Bingham	Ashmore	1826->	Chisholm G jnr	1826->
	Edmonsham	1782-1826	Bingham P	1782-1826
Bond	Coombe Keynes	1794->	Bond T	1794-1822
			Witt E	1822-35
Bragge	Burstock	1790->	Price AC	?-1822
			Bragge J	1822->
	Walditch	1793->	Sysons M	1793-1822
			Bragge CP	1822->
	Wambrook	1762-99	Acton EC	1762-99
	West Chelborough	1821->	Bragge CP	1821->
	Thorncombe	1832->	Bragge J	1832->
Brice	Canford Magna	1798->	Brice GT	1798-1826
Browne	Bettiscombe	1784->	Sawkins J	1784-99
			Churchill WRH	1799-1806
			Butler W	1806->
	Frampton	1776->	Sawkins J	1776-99
			Butler W	1800->
	Toller Fratrum	1784->	Stoppard E	1784-1800
			Meech G	1800->
	Toller Porcorum	1784->	Stoppard E	1784-1800
			Meech G	1800->
	Nether Cerne	1826->	Goodenough J	1826->
Cree	Owermoigne	1835->	Cree JR	1835->
Calcraft	Wareham	1828->	Foyle R	1828->
	Swanage	1801->	Bell A	1801-07
			Gale S	1807-16
			Bartlett TO	1817->
Chafin	Folke	1777->	Frome R	1777->
	Chettle	1789-1820	Erle C	1789-1810
			Napier JT	1810-1820
	Lydlinch	1768-1818	Chafin W	1768-1818
Clavell	Manstone	1786-1817	Clavell R	1786-1817
Compton	Mapperton	1820->	Compton JC	1820-35
			Fox C	1835->
Cooper	East Chelborough	1809->	Cooper B	1809->
Cox	Cheddington	1803->	Cox WT	1803-12
			Cox J	1812->
	Litton Cheyney	1824->	Cox J	1824-34
			Cox J	1834->
Damer	Witherstone	1763->	Richardson J	1763-95
			Bond T	1795-99
			Churchill WRH	1799->
	Winterborne Came	1789->	Macklin W	1789-96
			Hughes T	1796
			Howe S	1796-1800
			Colson JM	1800-04
			England W snr	1804->
	Winterborne Faringdon	1789->	Macklin W	1789-96
			Hughes T	1796
			Howe S	1796-1800
			Colson JM	1800-04
			England W snr	1804->
	Winterborne Clenstone	1789-95	Baldock CB	1789-95
	Pilsdon	1803-30	Macklin W	1803-04



Table D3.1: *Cont.*

			Colson JM	1804-30
	Winterborne Stickland	1796->	Howe S	1796-1825
			Hampden J	1825-28
			Churchill WRH	1828->
	Owermoigne	1808->	England W snr	1808->
Digby	Bishops Candle	1780->	Bristed N	1780-1810
			Digby C	1810->
	Oborne	1750->	Shuttleworth D	1750-?
			Digby C	1810-1811
			Parsons J	1811->
Drax	West Almer	1756->	Templeman N	1753-97
			Grosvenor R	1797-1834
			Hird JS	1834->
	East Morden	1755->	Beckett W	1755-92
			Grosvenor R	1793-1834
			Bowles C	1834->
Drewe	Wooton Fitzpaine	1775-1817	Drewe H	1775-1817
Fane	Spetisbury	1780->	Rackett T	1780->
	Lydlinch	1818->	Hobson T	1818-33
			Antram R	1833->
	Buckhorn Weston	1792->	Hawkins JF	1792->
	Lyme Regis	1826->	Randolph C	1826-33
			Parry Hodges FTA	1833->
Farquharson	Tarrant Monkton	1810->	Baskett	1810->
Floyer	West Stafford	1820->	England snr W	1820-35
Fox-Strangways	Winterborne Monkton	1773->	Freke J	1773-98
			Goldesborough J	1799-1823
			Barker WA	1823-31
			Murray E	1831->
	Stinsford	1780->	Floyer W	1780-1819
			Bradley R	1820-22
			Murray E	1822->
	Melbury Sampford	1783->	Jenkins W	1783-1823
			Broadley R	1823-30
			Strangways E	1830->
	Abbotsbury	1786->	Jenkins W	1786-1822
			Barker WA	1822-31
			Foster J	1832->
	Bridport	1766->	Sherive H	1766-91
			Sherive CH	1791-1801
			Williams D	1801-29
			Bronley R	1829->
	Melbury Osmund	1783->	Jenkins W	1783-1823
			Broadley R	1823-30
	Melbury Bubb	1783->	Jenkis W	1783-1823
			Broadley R	1823-30
			Selwyn T	1810->
	Maiden Newton	1787->	Strangways HCRF	1787->
Frampton	Affpuddle & Turners Puddle	1787->	Ettericke W	1787-1808
			Jackson JL	1808-24
			Waldy R	1824->
	Buckland Ripers	1776->	Coker R	1776-95
			Jackson JL	1795-1831
			Buckle RB	1831->
Glyn	Little Hinton	1781->	Birch C	1781-1800
			Grant C	1800-11
			Butt E	1811-30
			Glyn Carr J	1830->
Gooden	Nether Compton	1779->	Gooden JC	1779-1814
			Gooden WJ	1824->
	Over Compton	1779->	Gooden JC	1779-1814
	Melbury Abbas	1794->	Grove WF	1794-1824
		1794->	Gooden WJ	1824->
Gordon	Lillington	1797->	Black W	1797-1833
			Wise J	1833->
Gould	Marnhull	1828->	Place HJ	1828->



Table D3.1: *Cont.*

	Fleet	1762->	Fawconer E	1762-1802
			Gould G	1802->
Grove	Melbury Abbas	1793->	Jackson G	1793-94
			Grove WF	1794->
Hanham	Winterborne Zelstone	1800->	Hanham Sir J	1800->
Hoare	Candle Marsh	1788->	Messiter J	1788-1823
			Partridge W	1823-28
			Messiter R	1828->
	Purse Candle	1788->	Messiter J	1788-1823
			Partridge W	1823-28
			Messiter R	1828->
King	Tarrant Rushton	1809-10	King JW	1809-10
	Witchampton	1817-30	King CE	1817-27
			King C	1827-30
	Sherborne	1781->	Bristed N	1781-1810
			Gorton W	1810-30
			Parsons J	1830->
Meech	Hammoon	1832->	Meech WJ	1832->
Michel	Milborne St Andrew	1834->	Stuart GC	1834-35
			Hadley G	1835->
	West Compton	1773->	Templeman R	1773-90
			Meech G	1790->
Monro	Edmonsham	1835->	Sturt ND	1835->
Munden	Bere Hackett	1786->	Munden J	1786-1825
			Helyar HW	1825->
	Corscombe	1821->	Munden JM	1821->
Nepean	Bothenhampton	?->	Gooden JC	?-1814
			Fox H	1814->
Oglander	East Stoke	1804->	Oglander P	1804-14
			Glynn AW	1814-19
			Fox C	1819->
Pleydell	Winterborne Houghton	1782->	Langdon G	1782-1823
			Stuart EL	1823->
	Winterborne Clenstone	1795->	Dowland J	1795-1825
			Frome GC	1825->
	Studland	1786->	Colson JM	1786->
Ponsonby	Longfleet	1833->	Clarke WB	1833-38
Portman	Bryanstone & Durwestone	1793->	Fleet C	1793->
	Gussage St Michael	1804-30	Clapham J	1804-30
Rivers (Pitt)	Burton Bradstock	1775->	Hawker GR	1775-1812
			Seymer GA	1812->
	Belchallwell	1771->	Rogers RC	1771-1812
			Warton J	1812-17
			Bastard J	1817->
	Iwerne Steepleton	1753->	Rogers RC	1753-1812
			Rogers HH	1812->
	Melcombes Bingham	1775->	Smith E	1775-1814
			Davis J	1814->
	Shroton	1771->	Good H	1771-1800
			Seymer GA	1809->
	Okeford Fitzpaine	1780->	Butler W	1780-1811
			Hunter R	1811-15
			Lowndes J	1816-20
			Hunter GR	1820->
	Sturminster Newton	1791->	Butler W	1791-1800
			Michel J	1800->
	Cheselborne	1791->	Freke J	1791-97
			Birch C	1797-1817
			Watton J	1817-20
			Wickham	1820->
	Ibberton	1775->	Daubeney R	1775-1802
			Warre G	1802
			Manesty J	1802-13
			Salter T	1813->
	Shapwick	1793->	Davis W	1793-1811
			Rideout P	1811-34



Table D3.1: *Cont.*

			Scott W	1834->
	Cerne Abbas	1775->	Daubeney R	1775-1802
			Davis W	1802-11
			Davis J	1812->
	Compton Valence	1775->	Collins T	1775->
	Wareham	1773-1828	Hawker GR	1773-90
			Brice GT	1790-93
			Hyde GH	1793-1828
Salkeld	Fontmell Magna	1819->	Salkeld R	1819->
Seymer	Stoke Wake	1778->	Bingham P	1778-1812
			Birch C	1812-17
			Birch TW	1817->
Smith	Godmanstaone	1782-1814	Smith E	1782-1814
Sturt	More Crichell	1801->	Marsh G	1801->
	Long Crichell	1774->	Bingham G	1774-1800
			Marsh G	1801-08
			Sturt CWM	1808-15
			Vaux W	1815->
	Woodsford	1784->	Sherive H	1784-1801
			Seymour T	1802->
	Sutton Waldron	1782->	Napier E	1782-1816
			Vaux W	1816-22
			Everard E	1822-26
			Pattinson W	1826-33
			Snow T	1833-34
			Huxtable A	1834->
	Minterne Magna	1782->	Frome R	1782-1833
			Sturt ND	1833-35
			Truman J	1833->
	Tincleton	1802->	Seymour T	1802->
	Horton	1781-1816	King R	1781-1816
	Witchampton	1830->	Glyn Carr J	1830->
	Silton	1782->	Sherive H	1782-1801
			Hall H	1802-08
			Sturt CWM	1808-15
			Bateman R	1815->
Templer	Puddletown	1822->	Templer JA	1822->
	Thornford	1808->	Templer GH	1808->
Toogood	Kington Magna	1768-1824	Toogood J	1768-1824
Tregonwell	Anderson	1791->	Templeman N	1791-1813
			Churchill WRH	1813->
Trenchard/Pickard	Bloxworth	1774->	Maurice R	1774-80
			Pickard G	1780->
	Poxwell	1780->	Pickard G	1780->
	Warmwell	1780->	Pickard G	1780->
	Long Bredy	1790-1815	Templeman R	1790-97
			Templeman N	1797-1815
	Lytchett Matravers	1792-1832	Trenchard G	1792-?
			Wickens J	?-?
			Dillon HL	?-?
	Hammoon	1767-1832	Trenchard G	1767-1808
			Meech G	1808-32
	Langton Matravers	1780->	Trenchard G	1780-1808
			Dampier J	1808->
Williams	Longbredy	1815->	Aubrey E	1815-29
			Foot L	1829->
Archdeacon of Dorset	Gussage All Saints	1778->	King R	1778-1817
			Mayo J	1817-30
			Estridge JJ	1833->
Bishop of Bath & Wells	Whitchurch Canonicorum	1764->	Hawkins WH	1764-1801
			Moss C	1801-05
			Goforth F	1805->
Dean & Chapter of Christchurch	Tolpuddle	1775->	Hodgson B	1775-1805
Dean & Chapter of Windsor	Iwerne Minster	1783->	Topping T	1783-1823
			Say HM	1823-33
			Blennerhasset W	1833->



Table D3.1: *Cont.*

Bishop of Salisbury	Winterborne Whitchurch	1781->	Dowland J	1781-1821
			Dowland JJG	1821-29
			Fawcett C	1829-30
			Tyrwhitt T	1830->
	Winfrith	1800->	Burgis WP	1800-02
			Keate WB	1802-18
			Foster J	1818-19
			Bain JR	1819-20
			Fisher JI	1820->
	Charminster	1772->	Templeman R	1772-97
			Meech G	1797-1813
			Colson JM	1813-30
			Cox RA	1830->
	Osmington	1788->	Coates C	1788-1813
			Fisher J	1813-32
			Phillips JE	1832->
	Upwey	1754->	Fawconer E	1754-1802
			Burgis WP	1802->
	Fordington	?->	Marshall E	?-1798
			Palmer J	1779-1829
			Moule H	1829->
	Gillingham	1792->	Douglas W	1792-1819
			Fisher J	1819-32
			Deane H	1832->
	Stratton	1790->	Pye B	1790-1808
			Fisher P	1808-10
			Harris Hon TA	1810-24
			Till JS	1824->
	Winterborne St Martin	1776->	Cumming JP	1776-1801
			Wood G	1801-14
			Churchill WRH	1814->
	Broadwinsor	1789->	Tristram T	1789-92
			Martin G	1792-96
			Nott GF	1796-1813
			Murray G	1813-28
			Dowland JJG	1828->
	Hilton	1783->	Naish JW	1783-1800
			Malham J	1801-21
			Boucher JH	1821->
	Turnworth	1781->	Dowland J	1781-1820
			Dowland JJG	1820-29
			Fawcett C	1829-30
			Tyrwhitt T	1830->
Bishop of Bristol	Hawkchurch	1828->	Rudge J	1828->
	Dorchester	1781->	Templeman N	1781-1813
			Rickman HJ	1813-24
			Wood G	1824->
	Fifehead Magdalen	1777->	Tucker A	1777-95
			Salter E	1795-97
			Forester H	1797-1819
			Peacock E	1819->
Dean & Chapter of Salisbury	Folke	1833->	Ekins R	1833->
	Stourpaine	1810->	Ford RW	1810->
	Poorstock	1774->	Vivian Sir C	1774-1812
			Williams J	1821-32
			Cookson G	1832->
	Alton Pancras	1787->	Dacres W	1787-1811
Dean & Chapter of Wells	Buckland Newton	1791->	Moss C	1791-1805
			Venables J	1805->
Dean & Chapter of Winchester	Blandford	1793->	Garrett J	1793-1800
			Sheer JG	1800-07
			Chard GWJ	1821->
Bishop of Winchester	Wyke Regis	1765->	Cutting J	1765-92
			Payne S	1792-1801
			Byam S	1802-09
			Chamberlayne G	1809->

Table D3.1: *Cont.*

	Portland	1776->	Payne S	1776-1802
			Byam S	1802-09
			Addison D	1809-11
			North CE	1811-33
			Harrington J	1833->
Dean & Chapter of Windsor	Piddletrenthide	1775->	Poole H	1775-1811
			Iremonger F	1811-20
			Westcombe T	1820-27
			Swanton F	1827->
Rector of Swanage	Worth Matravers	1774->	Jones M	1775-?
			Bartlett TO	?->
Balliol College Cambridge	Bere Regis	1773->	Williams T	1773-1817
			Ley JC	1817->
Corpus Christi College Cambridge	Stalbridge	1773->	Colman W	1773-95
			Bradford E	1795->
Gonville & Caius College Cambridge	Broadwey	1753->	Goodrich R	1753-97
			Dixon F	1797-1801
			Marriot R	1801-20
			Dade T	1820->
	Bincombe	1753->	Goodrich R	1753-97
			Dixon F	1797-1801
			Marriot R	1801-20
			Dade T	1820->
Kings College Cambridge	Stour Provost	1791->	Manstie J	1791-1827
			Tomkyns J	1827-33
			Slingsby HJ	1833->
Lincoln College Oxford	Winterborne Steepleton	1785->	Jackson W	1785-1802
			Bown J	1802-11
			Pickering J	1811-23
			Skurray F	1823->
	Winterborne Abbas	1785->	Portington H	1785-95
			Jackson W	1795-1802
			Bown J	1802-11
			Rubering R	1811-23
			Jenkins C	1823
			Skurray F	1823->
New College Oxford	Beaminster	1788->	Brereton J	1788-1811
			Richards W	1811->
Queens College Oxford	Holwell	1778->	Radcliffe R	1778-97
			Monkhouse I	1797-1835
			Wilson J	1835->
Eton	Sturminster Marshall	1753->	Harris J	1753-1805
			Heath G	1805-22
			Irving M	1822->
	Piddlehinton	1782->	Keate W	1782-95
			Briggs T	1795-1810
			Colson JM	1810->
Winchester College	Sydling St Nicholas	1771->	Taunton R	1771-97
			Lee H	1798-1801
			Cumming JP	1801-10
			Howey W	1810-15
			Henville CW	1815-19
			Feaver G	1819->
	Bradford Peverell	1781-1813	Lear T	1781-98
			Jeffreys B	1798-1800
			Lee H	1800-09
			Cumming JP	1810
			Howey W	1811-13
Lord Chancellor	Hermitage	1834->	Blennerhasset J	1834->
	Frome St Quintin	1786-1827	Clayton J	1786-1827
The Crown	Bradpole	1783->	Jones J	1783-1814
			Hartwell H	1814-19
			Wallis S	1820-35
			Oakley F	1835->
	Farnham	1763->	Rideout P	1763-99
			Rideout P jnr	1799-1835



Table D3.1: *Cont.*

			West J	1835->
	Tarrant Monkton	?-1810	Fleet E	?-1810
	Pentridge	1780->	Goodrich R	1780-97
			Fawconer S	1797-1800
			Hobson T	1801-33
			Nicholoson E	1833->
	Frome Vauxchurch	1814-28	Trollope T	1814-28
	Frome St Quintin	1827->	Hoskins H	1827->
	Hermitage	1763-1834	Richardson J	1763-95
			Hobson T	1795-1834
	Bradford Peverell	1814->	Onslow M	1814->
	Langton Herring	1773-1824	Cox E	1773-1824
	Loders	1781-1835	Jones J	1781-1813
			Hartwell H	1813-20
			Wallis S	1820-35
	East Lulworth	1787->	Richards J	1787-1833
			Witt E	1833-35
			Cooke IW	1835->
Prince of Wales	Ryme Intrinsica	1793->	Jones M	1793-1823
			Owen N	1823-30
			Blennerhassett J	1830->

Key:       -> = duration of patronage and incumbency up to and beyond 1835.

Table D4.1: *Blandford North Division distribution of Incumbents*

Date	Parish	Incumbent
1791-1813	Anderson	Templeman N
1813->	Anderson	Churchill WRH
1793->	Bryanstone & Durwestone	Fleet C
1793-1800	Blandford Forum	Garrett J
1800-07	Blandford Forum	Sheer JG
1807->	Blandford Forum	Chard GWJ
1780->	Bloxworth	Pickard Gjnr
1747-97	Hazilbury Bryan	Rothery W
1797-1808	Hazilbury Bryan	Carpenter W
1808-21	Hazilbury Bryan	Reed F
1821->	Hazilbury Bryan	Walter H
1767-1808	Hammoon	Trenchard G
1808-32	Hammoon	Meech G
1832->	Hammoon	Meech WJ
1790->	Langton Long	Ridout JH
1810->	Stourpaine	Ford RW
1785-1821	Tarrant Hinton	Diggle T
1821->	Tarrant Hinton	Corry R
1806->	T Keynstone	Austen J
1786-1827	Tarrant Rawson	Bartholomew R
1827->	Tarrant Rawson	Saunders GE
1789-95	Winterborne Clenstone	Baldock CB
1795-1825	Winterborne Clenstone	Dowland J
1825->	Winterborne Clenstone	Frome GC
1782-1823	Winterborne Houghton	Langdon GH
1823->	Winterborne Houghton	Stuart EL
1796-1825	Winterborne Stickland	Howe S
1825-28	Winterborne Stickland	Hampden J
1828->	Winterborne Stickland	Churchill WRH
1763-1818	Winterborne Thomson	Maurice R
1818-22	Winterborne Thomson	Bankes E
1822->	Winterborne Thomson	Cambridge GP
1781-1820	Winterborne Whitchurch	Dowland J
1820-29	Winterborne Whitchurch	Dowland JG
1829-30	Winterborne Whitchurch	Fawcett C
1830->	Winterborne Whitchurch	Tyrwhitt T
1784-1801	Woodsford	Sherive H
1802->	Woodsford	Seymour T
1800->	Winterborne Zelstone	Hanham Sir J



Table D4.1.1: *Blandford North changes to Incumbencies*

	Number of changes
1790-99	2
1800-09	4
1810-19	2
1820-29	10
1830-35	3

Table D5.1: *Blandford South Division distribution of Incumbents*

1787-1808	Affpuddle & Turners Puddle	Ettericke W
1808-1824	Affpuddle & Turners Puddle	Jackson JL
1824->	Affpuddle & Turners Puddle	Waldy R
1773-1817	Bere Regis	Williams T
1817->	Bere Regis	Ley JC
1790-99	Corfe Castle	I'Anson JB
1800-20	Corfe Castle	Bond W
1820->	Corfe Castle	Bankes E
1794-1822	Coombe Keynes	Bond T
1822-35	Coombe Keynes	Witt E
1835->	Coombe Keynes	Cooke IW
1787-1833	East Lulworth	Richards J
1833-35	East Lulworth	Witt E
1835->	East Lulworth	Cooke IW
1804-14	East Stoke	Oglander P
1814-19	East Stoke	Glynn AW
1819->	East Stoke	Fox C
1780-1808	Langton Matravers	Trenchard G
1808->	Langton Matravers	Dampier J
1808-35	Owermoigne	England W
1835->	Owermoigne	Cree JR
1780->	Poxwell & Warmwell	Pickard Gjnr
1795->	Steeple	Richards W
1786->	Studland	Colson JM
1801-07	Swanage	Bell A
1807-16	Swanage	Gale S
1817->	Swanage	Bartlett TO
1775-1793	Worth Matravers	Jones M
1793->	Worth Matravers	Bartlett TO
1773-90	Wareham	Hawker GR
1790-93	Wareham	Brice GT
1793-1828	Wareham	Hyde GH
1828->	Wareham	Foyle R
1800-02	Winfrith	Burgis WP
1802-18	Winfrith	Keate WB
1818-19	Winfrith	Foster J
1819-20	Winfrith	Bain JR
1820->	Winfrith	Fisher GI

Table D5.1.1: *Blandford South changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of changes
1790-99	3
1800-09	5
1810-19	6
1820-29	4
1830-35	

Table D6.1: *Bridport Division distribution of Incumbents*

1789->	Askerswell	Colmer J
1775-1812	Burton Bradstock	Hawker R
1812->	Burton Bradstock	Seymer GA
1788-1811	Beaminster	Brereton J
1811->	Beaminster	Richards WP
1784-99	Bettiscombe	Sawkins J
1799-1806	Bettiscombe	Churchill WRH



Table D6.1: *Cont.*

1806->	Bettiscombe	Butler W
1753-97	Bincombe	Goodrich R
1797-1801	Bincombe	Dixon F
1801-20	Bincombe	Marriot R
1820->	Bincombe	Dade T
1779-1814	Bothenhampton	Gooden JC
1814->	Bothenhampton	Fox H
1783-1814	Bradpole	Jones J
1814-19	Bradpole	Hartwell H
1820-35	Bradpole	Wallis S
1835->	Bradpole	Oakley F
1766-91	Bridport	Sherive H
1791-1801	Bridport	Sherive CH
1801-29	Bridport	Williams D
1829->	Bridport	Bronley R
1789-92	Broadwinsor	Tristram T
1792-96	Broadwinsor	Martin G
1796-1813	Broadwinsor	Nott GF
1813-28	Broadwinsor	Murray G
1828->	Broadwinsor	Dowland JJG
1722-1792	Burstock	Gibbs G
1792-1822	Burstock	Price AC
1822->	Burstock	Bragge J
1784-1818	Catherstone Lewestone	Combe B
1818->	Catherstone Lewestone	Tucker A
1775-1797	Compton Valence	Collins T
1797->	Compton Valence	Gambier F
1782-1827	Charmouth	Audain J
1827-33	Charmouth	Glover WL
1833->	Charmouth	Hales JD
1803-12	Cheddington	Cox WT
1812->	Cheddington	Cox J
1788-1821	Corscombe	Munden J
1821->	Corscombe	Munden JM
1776-99	Frampton	Sawkins J
1800->	Frampton	Butler W
1791-1827	Hooke	Lane S
1827->	Hooke	Cornish WF
1781-1813	Loders	Jones J
1813-20	Loders	Hartwell H
1820-35	Loders	Wallis S
1835->	Loders	Macarthy FM
1790-97	Long Bredy	Templeman R
1798-1815	Long Bredy	Templeman N
1815	Long Bredy	Foote J
1815-29	Long Bredy	Aubrey E
1829->	Long Bredy	Foot L
1787-98	Lyme Regis	Dommett J
1798-1804	Lyme Regis	Evans W
1804-26	Lyme Regis	Jones W
1826-33	Lyme Regis	Randolph C
1833->	Lyme Regis	Parry Hodges FTA
1762-1819	North Poorton	Taylor J
1819	North Poorton	Russell JC
1819->	North Poorton	Cox RS
1768-1803	Pilsdon	Paul J
1803-04	Pilsdon	Macklin W
1804-30	Pilsdon	Colson JM
1830->	Pilsdon	Fox H
1774-1812	Poorstock	Vivian Sir C
1812-32	Poorstock	Williams J
1832->	Poorstock	Cookson G
1783-1820	South Mapperton	Fox T
1820-35	South Mapperton	Compton JC
1835->	South Mapperton	Fox C
1794-1809	South Perrot	Tompkins F

Table D6.1: *Cont.*

1809->	South Perrot	Wills J
1777-1812	Stockland	Cox WT
1812->	Stockland	Cox J
1782-1805	Symondsbury	Syndercombe G
1805-06	Symondsbury	Colmer J
1806->	Symondsbury	Raymond G
1790-1832	Thorncombe	Egerton C
1832->	Thorncombe	Bragge J
1785-95	Winterborne Abbas	Portington H
1795-1802	Winterborne Abbas	Jackson W
1802-11	Winterborne Abbas	Bown J
1811-23	Winterborne Abbas	Rubering R
1823	Winterborne Abbas	Jenkins C
1823->	Winterborne Abbas	Skurray F
1764-1801	Whitchurch Canonorum	Hawkins WH
1801-05	Whitchurch Canonorum	Moss C
1805->	Whitchurch Canonorum	Goforth F
1775-1817	Wooton Fitzpaine	Drewe H
1817->	Wooton Fitzpaine	Tucker A
1793-1822	Walditch	Sysons M
1822->	Walditch	Bragge CP
1762-99	Wambrook	Acton EC
1799-1803	Wambrook	Cox WT
1803-05	Wambrook	Palmer J
1805-08	Wambrook	Forward EC
1808-18	Wambrook	Bradley WJ
1818->	Wambrook	Edwards H
1763-95	Witherstone	Richardson J
1795-99	Witherstone	Bond T
1799-1807	Witherstone	Churchill WRH
1807->	Witherstone	Compton PM
1755-1794	Wraxall	Gatehouse J
1794->	Wraxall	Pace W

D6.1.1: *Bridport Division changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of changes
1790-99	14
1800-09	17
1810-19	17
1820-29	13
1830-35	8

Table D7.1: *Cerne Division distribution of Incumbents*

1787-1811	Alton Pancras	Dacres W
1811->	Alton Pancras	Masterman H
1791-1805	Buckland Newton	Moss C
1805->	Buckland Newton	Venables J
1782-1805	Cattistock	Ravenhill J
1805->	Cattistock	Broadley R
1775-1802	Cerne Abbas	Daubeney R
1802-11	Cerne Abbas	Davis W
1812->	Cerne Abbas	Davis J
1791-97	Cheselbourne	Freke J
1797-1817	Cheselbourne	Birch C
1817-20	Cheselbourne	Watton J
1820->	Cheselbourne	Wickham T
1777-1826	Compton Abbas	Baskett J
1827->	Compton Abbas	Baskett J
1782-1814	Godmanstone	Smith E
1814-24	Godmanstone	Seagram J
1824->	Godmanstone	Goodenough J
1774-1828	Hawkchurch	Dommett W
1828->	Hawkchurch	Rudge J
1783-1800	Hilton	Naish JW



Table D7.1: *Cont.*

1801-21	Hilton	Malham J
1821->	Hilton	Boucher H
1775-1802	Ibberton	Daubeney R
1802	Ibberton	Warre G
1802-13	Ibberton	Manesty J
1813->	Ibberton	Salter T
1775-1814	Melcombe Bingham	Smith E
1814->	Melcombe Bingham	Davis J
1782-1833	Minterne Magna	Frome R
1833-35	Minterne Magna	Sturt ND
1835->	Minterne Magna	Truman J
1790-1814	Mappowder	Herbert RC
1814-34	Mappowder	Shipley C
1835->	Mappowder	Allen JHT
1826->	Nether Cerne	Goodenough J
1775-1811	Piddletrenthide	Poole H
1811-20	Piddletrenthide	Iremonger F
1820-27	Piddletrenthide	Westcombe T
1827->	Piddletrenthide	Swanton F
1741-97	Pulham	Parsons J
1797-1832	Pulham	Penfold GS
1832->	Pulham	Hinds JT
1778-1812	Stoke Wake	Bingham P
1812-17	Stoke Wake	Birch C
1817->	Stoke Wake	Birch TW
1771-97	Sydling St Nicholas	Taunton R
1798-1801	Sydling St Nicholas	Lee H
1801-10	Sydling St Nicholas	Cumming JP
1810-15	Sydling St Nicholas	More H
1815-19	Sydling St Nicholas	Henville CB
1819->	Sydling St Nicholas	Feaver G
1785-93	Wooton Glanville	Fox T
1793-1814	Wooton Glanville	Evans H
1814-35	Wooton Glanville	Monkhouse I
1835->	Wooton Glanville	Wickens J

Table D7.1.1: *Cerne Division changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of changes
1790-99	4
1800-09	7
1810-19	12
1820-29	7
1830-35	5

Table D8.1: *Dorchester Division distribution of Incumbents*

1786-1822	Abbotsbury	Jenkins W
1822-31	Abbotsbury	Barker WA
1832->	Abbotsbury	Foster J
1781-98	Bradford Peverell	Lear T
1798-1800	Bradford Peverell	Jeffreys B
1800-09	Bradford Peverell	Lee H
1810	Bradford Peverell	Cumming JP
1811-13	Bradford Peverell	Howey W
1814->	Bradford Peverell	Onslow M
1776-95	Bradford Ripers	Coker R
1796->	Buckland Ripers	Jackson JL
1795-1805	Broadmayne	Fothergill J
1805-29	Broadmayne	Urquhart DH
1829->	Broadmayne	Urquhart F
1780-1797	Broadwey	Goodrich R
1797-1801	Broadwey	Dixon F
1801-20	Broadwey	Marriot R
1820->	Broadwey	Dade T
1768-1818	Burlestone & Athelstone	Maurice R



Table D8.1: *Cont.*

1818->	Burlestone & Athelstone	Langdon GH
1772-97	Charminster	Templeman R
1797-1813	Charminster	Meech G
1813-30	Charminster	Colson JM
1830->	Charminster	Cox RA
1785-1833	Chilcombe	Foyle E
1833->	Chilcombe	Clemeston D
1775-1813	Chilfrome	Bryett J
1813-24	Chilfrome	Leigh J
1824->	Chilfrome	Firth WC
1774-1818	Dorchester All Saints	Bryer T
1818->	Dorchester All Saints	Davis E
1781-1813	Dorchester Holy Trinity	Templeman N
1813-24	Dorchester Holy Trinity	Rickman HJ
1824->	Dorchester Holy Trinity	Wood G
1781-1813	Dorchester St Peters	Templeman N
1813-21	Dorchester St Peters	Rickman HJ
1821->	Dorchester St Peters	Colson JM
1768-1809	Eeast Chelborough	Hayman H
1809->	East Chelborough	Cooper B
1786-1827	Frome St Quintin	Clayton J
1827->	Frome St Quintin	Hoskins H
1781-1814	Frome Vauxchurch	Payne S
1814-28	Frome Vauxchurch	Trollope TD
1828->	Frome Vauxchurch	Lane S
1762-1802	Fleet	Fawconer E
1802->	Fleet	Gould G
1779-1829	Fordington	Palmer J
1829->	Fordington	Moule H
1763-95	Hermitage	Richardson J
1796-1834	Hermitage	Hobson T
1834->	Hermitage	Blennerhasset J
1765-1804	Litton Cheyney	Richards J
1804-24	Litton Cheyney	Frome G
1824-33	Litton Cheyney	Cox J
1833->	Litton Cheyney	Cox JS
1773-1824	Langton Herring	Cox E
1824->	Langton Herring	Trenow FJC
1787->	Maiden Newton	Strangways CRF
1777-1809	Melcombe Regis	Grove T
1809->	Melcombe Regis	Wyndham T
1783-1823	Melbury Sampford	Jenkins W
1823-30	Melbury Sampford	Broadley R
1830->	Melbury Sampford	Strangways E
1779-1800	Milborne St Andrew	Wood J
1800-34	Milborne St Andrew	Wood J jnr
1834-35	Milborne St Andrew	Stuart GC
1835->	Milborne St Andrew	Hadley G
1788-1813	Osmington	Coates C
1813-32	Osmington	Fisher J
1832->	Osmington	Phillips Sir JE
1782-95	Piddlehinton	Keate WB
1795-1810	Piddlehinton	Briggs T
1810->	Piddlehinton	Colson JM
1778-1814	Portisham	Miller P
1814->	Portisham	Fearon I
1776-1802	Portland	Payne S
1802-09	Portland	Byam S
1809-11	Portland	Addison D
1811-33	Portland	North CE
1833->	Portland	Harrington J
1780-1813	Preston & Sutton Poyntz	Coates C
1814->	Preston & Sutton Poyntz	Piers O
1790-1805	Puddletown	Gibbons J
1805-22	Puddletown	Heath G
1822->	Puddletown	Templer JA



Table D8.1: *Cont.*

1770-1804	Punknowle	Frome G
1804->	Punknowle	Clutterbuck G
1755-94	Rampisham	Gatehouse J
1794->	Rampisham	Pace W
1780-1819	Stinsford	Floyer W
1820-22	Stinsford	Bradley R
1822->	Stinsford	Murray E
1760-1810	Stokewood	Bellamy A
1810-32	Stokewood	Bellamy T
1832->	Stokewood	Ayres T
1790-1809	Stratton	Pye B
1810-10	Stratton	Fisher P
1810-24	Stratton	Harris TA
1824->	Stratton	Till JS
1773-1817	Swyre	Chapeau J
1817->	Swyre	Wickens J
1787-1824	Toller Fratrum	Frome G
1824-30	Toller Fratrum	Butt E
1831->	Toller Fratrum	Philips T
1784-1800	Toller Porcorum	Stoppard E
1800->	Toller Porcorum	Meech G
1802->	Tincton	Seymour T
1775-1805	Tolpuddle	Hodgson B
Data missing	Tolpuddle	Data missing
1754-1802	Upwey	Fawconer E
1802->	Upwey	Burgis WP
1789-96	Winterborne Came	Macklin W
1796	Winterborne Came	Hughes T
1796-1800	Winterborne Came	Howe S
1800-04	Winterborne Came	Colson JM
1804->	Winterborne Came	England W
1749-93	West Chelborough	Fox T
1793-1821	West Chelborough	Buckland C
1822->	West Chelborough	Bragge CP
1768-95	West Chickerell	Payne S
1795-1830	West Chickerell	Goiten W
1830->	West Chickerell	Marshall W
1789-96	Winterborne Faringdon	Macklin W
1796	Winterborne Faringdon	Hughes T
1796-1800	Winterborne Faringdon	Howe S
1800-04	Winterborne Faringdon	Colson JM
1804->	Winterborne Faringdon	England W
1783-1805	West Knighton	Fothergill J
1805-29	West Knighton	Urquhart DH
1829->	West Knighton	Urquhart F
1773-98	Winterborne Monkton	Freke J
1799-1823	Winterborne Monkton	Goldesborough J
1823-31	Winterborne Monkton	Barker WA
1831->	Winterborne Monkton	Murray E
1765-92	Wyke Regis	Cutting J
1792-1801	Wyke Regis	Payne S
1802-09	Wyke Regis	Byam S
1809->	Wyke Regis	Chamberlayne G
1776-1801	Winterborne St Martin	Cumming JP
1801-14	Winterborne St Martin	Wood G
1814->	Winterborne St Martin	Churchill WRH
1775-1801	West Stafford	Beaver G
1801-19	West Stafford	Floyer W
1820-35	West Stafford	England W
1753-1812	Iwerne Steepleton	Rogers RC
1812->	Iwerne Steepleton	Rogers HH
1785-1802	Winterborne Steepleton	Jackson W
1802-11	Winterborne Steepleton	Bown J
1811-23	Winterborne Steepleton	Pickering R
1823->	Winterborne Steepleton	Skurray F



Table D8.1.1: *Dorchester Division changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of Changes
1790-99	15
1800-09	26
1810-19	20
1820-29	22
1830-35	14

D9.1: *Shaftesbury East Division distribution of Incumbents*

1776-98	Canford Magna	Henning R
1798-1826	Canford Magna	Brice GT
1826->	Canford Magna	Bartlett WO
1765-96	Chalbury	Harrington J
1796-1815	Chalbury	Williams H
1815->	Chalbury	Harrington JE
1789-1810	Chettle	Erle C
1810-20	Chettle	Napier JT
1820->	Chettle	West J
1787-1831	Cranborne	Donne H
1831->	Cranborne	Pare FH
1755-92	East Morden	Beckett W
1793-1834	East Morden	Grosvenor R
1835->	East Morden	Bowle C
1782-1826	Edmonsham	Bingham P
1826-35	Edmonsham	Robins J
1835->	Edmonsham	Sturt ND
1778-1817	Gussage All Saints	King R
1817-33	Gussage All Saints	Mayo J
1833->	Gussage All Saints	Estridge JJ
1782-1804	Gussage St Michael	Howell R
1804-30	Gussage St Michael	Clapham J
1830->	Gussage St Michael	Dewdrey G
1781-93	Hinton Martell	Huntingdon GI
1793-97	Hinton Martell	Storey W
1797-1827	Hinton Martell	Pugh H
1827-29	Hinton Martell	Moone CF
1829->	Hinton Martell	Hampden J
1776-1806	Hampreston	Harbin J
1806-34	Hampreston	Place MW
1834->	Hampreston	Blunt EP
1781-1816	Horton	King R
1816->	Horton	Thompson J
1774-1800	Long Crichel	Bingham G
1801-1808	Long Crichel	Marsh G
1808-1815	Long Crichel	Sturt GWM
1815->	Long Crichel	Vaux W
1781-1800	Little Hinton	Birch C
1800-11	Little Hinton	Grant C
1811-30	Little Hinton	Butt E
1830->	Little Hinton	Glyn CJ
1833->	Longfleet	Clarke WB
1792-1808	Lytchett Matravers	Trenchard G
1808-20	Lytchett Matravers	Wickens J
1820-32	Lytchett Matravers	Dillon HL
1832->	Lytchett Matravers	Fleet C
1755-1800	More Crichel	Bingham G
1801->	More Crichel	Marsh G
1780-97	Pentridge	Goodrich R
1797-1800	Pentridge	Fawconer S
1801-33	Pentridge	Hobson T
1833->	Pentridge	Nicholoson E
1753-1805	Sturminster Marshall	Harris J
1805-22	Sturminster Marshall	Heath G
1822->	Sturminster Marshall	Irving M
1793-1811	Shapwick	Davis W
1811-34	Shapwick	Rideout P



Table D9.1: *Cont.*

1834->	Shapwick	Scott W
1780->	Spetisbury	Rackett T
1810-1826	Tarrant Monkton	Fleet E
1826->	Tarrant Monkton	Baskett J
1765-98	Tarrant Rushton	Lovell E
1798-1808	Tarrant Rushton	Hunt J
1808-09	Tarrant Rushton	Hay T
1809-10	Tarrant Rushton	King JW
1810->	Tarrant Rushton	Saunders GE
1753-97	West Almer	Templeman N
1797-1834	West Almer	Grosvenor R
1834->	West Almer	Hird JS
1769-97	West Parley	Storey W
1797->	West Parley	Ness RD
1791-91	Wimborne St Giles	Sherive H
1791-1810	Wimborne St Giles	Talbot C
1810-23	Wimborne St Giles	Talbot Cjnr
1823->	Wimborne St Giles	Moore R
1780-1817	Witchampton	King R
1817-27	Witchampton	King CE
1827-30	Witchampton	King C
1830->	Witchampton	Glyn CJ

Table D9.1.1: *Shaftesbury East Division changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of changes
1790-99	10
1800-09	11
1810-19	9
1820-29	10
1830-35	13

Table D10.1: *Shaftesbury West Division distribution of Incumbents*

1785-1826	Ashmore	Chisholm G
1826->	Ashmore	Chisholm Gjnr
1771-1812	Belchalwell	Rogers RC
1812-17	Belchalwell	Warton J
1817->	Belchalwell	Bastard J
1772-1800	Cann	Good H
1800-06	Cann	Churchill WRH
1806->	Cann	Wood G
1779-1812	Fontmell Magna	Dibben R
1812-19	Fontmell Magna	Bullock E
1819->	Fontmell Magna	Salkeld R
1763-1799	Farnham	Rideout P
1799-1835	Farnham	Rideout Pjnr
1792-1819	Gillingham	Douglas W
1819-32	Gillingham	Fisher J
1832->	Gillingham	Deane H
1783-1823	Iwrne Minster	Topping T
1823-33	Iwerne Minster	Say HM
1833->	Iwerne Minster	Blennerhasset W
1776-93	Melbury Abbas	Grove H
1793-94	Melbury Abbas	Jackson G
1794->	Melbury Abbas	Grove WF
1773-97	Shaftesbury St James	Templeman R
1797-1819	Shaftesbury St James	Bryer T
1819-33	Shaftesbury St James	Ricketts F
1833->	Shaftesbury St James	Pattinson W
1770-1802	Shaftesbury St Peters	Topham W
1802-19	Shaftesbury St Peters	Boucher J
1819-23	Shaftesbury St Peters	Mayo J
1823-25	Shaftesbury St Peters	Everard E
1825->	Shaftesbury St Peters	Pattisson W
1785-1813	Shillingstone	Jacob E

Table D10.1: *Cont.*

1813->	Shillingstone	Wooley HR
1743-97	Tarrant Gunville	Fleet E
1797-1827	Tarrant Gunville	Simpson F
1828->	Tarrant Gunville	Watts J
1781-1820	Turnworth	Dowland J
1820-29	Turnworth	Dowland JJG
1829-30	Turnworth	Fawcett C
1830->	Turnworth	Tyrwhitt T
1773-90	West Compton	Templeman R
1790->	West Compton	Meech G

Table D10.1.1: *Shaftesbury West Division changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of changes
1790-99	6
1800-09	3
1810-19	8
1820-29	7
1830-35	4

Table D11.1: *Sherborne Division distribution of Incumbents*

1790-1812	Bradford Abbas & Clifton Mabank	West EM
1812-25	Bradford Abbas & Clifton Mabank	Smedley E
1825-28	Bradford Abbas & Clifton Mabank	Williams D
1828->	Bradford Abbas & Clifton Mabank	Grant R
1780-1810	Bishops Candle	Bristed N
1810->	Bishops Candle	Digby C
1786-1825	Bere Hackett	Munden J
1825->	Bere Hackett	Helyar HW
1788-1823	Candle Marsh	Messiter J
1823-28	Candle Marsh	Partridge W
1828->	Candle Marsh	Messiter R
1777-1833	Folke	Frome R
1833->	Folke	Ekins R
1783-1826	Long Burton	Cosens R
1826->	Long Burton	Stone G
1757-97	Lillington	Hutchins G
1797-1833	Lillington	Black W
1833->	Lillington	Wise J
1768-1818	Lydlinch	Chafin W
1818-33	Lydlinch	Hobson T
1833->	Lydlinch	Antram R
1792-96	Melbury Bubb	Glover R
1796-1810	Melbury Bubb	Bingham W
1810->	Melbury Bubb	Selwyn T
1783-1823	Melbury Osmund	Jenkins W
1823->	Melbury Osmund	Broadley R
1779-1814	Nether & Over Compton	Gooden JC
1814-24	Nether & Over Compton	Hobson T
1824->	Netherr & Over Compton	Gooden WJ
1750-1809	Oborne	Shuttleworth D
1810-1811	Oborne	Digby C
1811->	Oborne	Parsons J
1788-1823	Purse Candle	Messiter J
1823-28	Purse Candle	Partridge W
1828->	Purse Candle	Messiter R
1793-1823	Ryme Intrinsica	Jones M
1823-30	Ryme Intrinsica	Owen N
1830->	Ryme Intrinsica	Blennerhasset J
1781-1810	Sherborne	Bristed N
1810-30	Sherborne	Gorton W
1830->	Sherborne	Parsons J*
1775-1808	Thornford	Sampson J
1808->	Thornford	Templer GH
1766-1821	Up Cerne	Beryew J



Table D11.1: *Cont.*

1821-28	Up Cerne	Bartlett N
1828->	Up Cerne	White RW
1777-1809	Yetminster	Cooper E
1809->	Yetminster	Cooper B

Table D11.1.1: *Sherborne Division changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of changes
1790-99	2
1800-09	2
1810-19	8
1820-29	13
1830-35	5

Table D12.1: *Sturminster Division distribution of Incumbents*

1792->	Buckhorne Weston	Hawkins JF
1763-1815	Childe Okeford	Hall H
1815->	Childe Okeford	North CE
1777-95	Fifehead Magdalen	Tucker A
1795-97	Fifehead Magdalen	Salter E
1797-1819	Fifehead Magdalen	Forester H
1819->	Fifehead Magdalen	Peacock E
1778-97	Holwell	Radcliffe R
1797-1835	Holwell	Monkhouse I
1835->	Holwell	Wilson J
1768-1824	Kington Magna	Toogood J
1825-26	Kington Magna	Hartropp WE
1826-29	Kington Magna	Mortimer HS
1829->	Kington Magna	Wingate JW
1786-1817	Manstone	Clavell R
1817-1820	Manstone	Wickens J
1820->	Manstone	St John GF
1778-1828	Marnhull	Place H
1828->	Marnhull	Place HJ
1780-1811	Okeford Fitzpaine	Butler T
1811-15	Okeford Fitzpaine	Hunter R
1816-20	Okeford Fitzpaine	Lowndes J
1820 ->	Okeford Fitzpaine	Hunter GR
1755-1797	Stock Gaylard	Lewys C
1797-1819	Stock Gaylard	Yeatman J
1819->	Stock Gaylard	Yeatman HF
1791-1800	Sturminster Newton	Butler W
1800->	Sturminster Newton	Michel J
1791-1827	Stour Provost	Manesty J
1827-33	Stour Provost	Tomkyns J
1833->	Stour Provost	Slingsby HJ
1782-1816	Sutton Waldron	Napier E
1816-22	Sutton Waldron	Vaux W
1822-26	Sutton Waldron	Everard E
1826-33	Sutton Waldron	Pattinson W
1833-34	Sutton Waldron	Snow T
1834->	Sutton Waldron	Huxtable A
1771-1800	Shroton	Good H
1800-09	Shroton	Warton J
1809->	Shroton	Seymer GA
1782-1801	Silton	Sherive H*
1802-08	Silton	Hall H
1808-15	Silton	Sturt WM
1815-38	Silton	Bateman R
1773-94	Stalbridge	Colman W
1795->	Stalbridge	Bradford E

Table D12.1.1: *Sturminster Division changes to Incumbencies*

Decade	Number of changes
1790-99	5
1800-09	5
1810-19	8
1820-29	9
1830-35	3

Table D13.1: *Pluralism in Dorset*

	1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35
Blandford North	7	9	8	10	8
Blandford South	6	7	6	7	7
Bridport	17	16	14	15	11
Cerne	8	9	10	6	8
Dorchester	25	16	29	29	15
Shaftesbury East	10	7	8	10	10
Shaftesbury West	6	7	8	8	8
Sherborne	7	8	11	12	8
Sturminster	3	5	5	6	4

*Note to Table D13.1*

The totals of pluralists for each decade in each division were calculated using the following method that I will illustrate with the example of the reverend WRH Churchill. He held the following livings:

Blandford North: Anderson from 1813 and Winterborne Stickland from 1828  
Bridport: Bettiscombe 1799-1806 and Witherstone, 1799-1807  
Dorchester: Winterborne St Martin from 1814  
Shaftesbury West: Cann, 1800-06

In each decade at least two of his livings overlapped such that once in every decade between 1790-1835 he was recorded as a pluralist in each of the four divisions above.

Table D14.1: *Changes to livings by decade*

Division	Number of Livings	1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	1820-29	1830-35	Totals
Sherborne	18	2	2	8	13	5	30
Shaston West	14	6	3	8	7	4	28
Shaston East	26	10	11	9	10	13	53
Dorchester	52	15	26	20	22	14	97
Cerne	19	4	7	12	7	5	35
Bridport	35	14	17	17	13	8	69
Blandford South	15	3	5	6	4	4	22
Blandford North	18	2	4	2	10	2	20
Sturminster Newton	15	5	5	8	9	3	30
Totals	212	61	80	90	95	58	384

*Sources:*

J. Hutchins, *The History of the Antiquities of Dorset*, 4 vols (Blandford, 1773, 1874 edn).

Sources held at the Dorset County Record Office:  
D/WLC/R22 Weld Registers. List of Converts to Catholicism,1685-1803.  
NM2-NM10, Methodist Registers:  
NM.2 Dorchester.  
NM.3 Poole.  
NM.4 Portland.  
NM.5 Shaftesbury and Gillingham.  
NM.6 Sherborne.  
NM.7 Stour Valley.  
NM.8 Swanage.  
NM.9 Weymouth.  
NM.10 Wimborne  
PE/ELV East Lulworth: RE1/2 and RE2/1 (Christenings); RE3/1 and RE3/2 (Marriages).  
PE/ELV East Lulworth: NC.1 Records of Catholic Chapel at Lulworth Castle: Baptisms, 1755-1844.  
QSM 1/11 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1783-1797.



QSM 1/12 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1798-1806.  
QSM 1/13 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1806-1812.  
QSM 1/14 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1812-1819.  
QSM 1/15 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1819-1826.  
QSM 1/16 Quarter Sessions Order Book 1827-1836.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Manuscript Sources: National repositories.*

HO 42/41 Disturbance Papers

PRO MH12/2764 Correspondence of the Poole Poor Law Union

PRO MH12/2885 Correspondence of the Dorchester Poor Law Union

PRO MH12/2911 Correspondence of the Wimborne Poor Law Union

PRO MH32/69 Correspondence of the Poor Law Commissioners

### *Manuscript Sources: Local repositories.*

#### *Dorset County Record Office.*

In researching this case-history I have used almost one thousand settlement and removal documents from sixty Dorset parishes covering the period 1790 to 1835. The Dorset county record office lists parish settlement and removal documents in four categories: removal orders from a parish, removal orders to a parish, settlement examinations, and settlement certificates. Every document in each of these categories is call-numbered. To list every document consulted by each category would therefore require more than two hundred pages of text; virtually another thesis. I have therefore elected to list each of the sixty parishes once with the generic call numbers for each category of settlement and removal.

#### *Beaminster:*

PE/BE      OV4/1 Settlement Certificates.  
              OV4/2 Removals from Beaminster.  
              OV4/3 Removals to Beaminster.  
              OV4/4 Settlement Examinations.

#### *Bere Regis:*

PE/BER      OV21 Settlement Certificates.  
              OV22 Settlement Examinations.  
              OV23 Removal Orders from Bere Regis.  
              OV24 Removal Orders to Bere Regis.



*Blandford Forum:*

PE/BF      OV5/1 Settlement Certificates.  
             OV5/2 Removal Orders from Blandford Forum.  
             OV5/3 Removal Orders to Blandford Forum.  
             OV5/5 Settlement Examinations.

*Broadwinsor:*

PE/BDW    OV3/2 Removal Orders from Broadwinsor.  
             OV3/3 Removal Orders to Broadwinsor.  
             OV3/4 Settlement Examinations.

*Bradford Abbas:*

PE/BRA      OV2/1 Removals to Bradford Abbas.  
             OV2/2 Removals from Bradford Abbas.

*Bradford Peverell:*

PE/BRP      OV2/1 Settlement Examinations.  
             OV3/1 Removals from Bradford Peverell.

*Broadwey:*

PE/BDY      OV8 Settlement Examinations.  
             OV9 Removals from Broadwey.  
             OV10 Removals to Broadwey.

*Buckland Newton:*

PE/BCN      OV14 Settlement Certificates.  
             OV15 Removals from Buckland Newton.  
             OV16 Removals to Buckland Newton.  
             OV17 Settlement Examinations.

*Canford Magna:*

PE/CAM      OV5 Settlement Certificates.  
             OV6 Removals from Canford Magna.  
             OV7 Removals to Canford Magna.  
             OV8 Settlement Examinations.

*Castleton:*

PE/CAS      OV12 Settlement Examinations.  
             OV13 Removals from Castleton.

*Cerne Abbas:*

PE/CEA      OV3/1 Settlement Examinations.  
             OV3/3 Removals from Cerne Abbas.  
             OV3/4 Removals to Cerne Abbas.

*Corfe Castle:*

PE/COC      OV/185 Settlement Certificates.  
             OV/186 Removals from Corfe Castle.  
             OV/187 Removals from Corfe Castle cont.  
             OV/188 Settlement Examinations.

*Corscombe:*

PE/COR      OV4/2 Settlement Examinations.  
             OV4/3 Removals from Corscombe.  
             OV4/4 Removals to Corscombe.

*Dorchester All Saints:*

PE/DO(AS) OV15 Removals from Dorchester All Saints.  
OV16 Removals to Dorchester All Saints.  
OV17 Settlement Examinations.

*East Stour:*

PE/EST OV4/1 Settlement Examinations.  
OV4/2 Removals from East Stour.

*Folke:*

PE/FOL OV3/2 Settlement Examinations.  
OV3/3 Removals from Folke.  
OV3/4 Removals to Folke.

*Fontmell Magna:*

PE/FOM OV10 Settlement Examinations.  
OV12 Removals from Fontmell Magna.  
OV13 Removals to Fontmell Magna.

*Fordington St George:*

PE/FOR(SG) OV43 Removals from Fordington St George.  
OV44 Removals to Fordington St George.  
OV45 Settlement Examinations.

*Glanvilles Wooton:*

PE/GLW OV3/1 Settlement Examinations.  
OV3/2 Removals from Glanvilles Wooton.  
OV3/3 Removals to Glanvilles Wooton.

*Hammoon:*

PE/HAM OV4 Settlement Examinations.  
OV5 Removals to Hammoon.

*Hampreston:*

PE/HAP OV2 Settlement Examinations.

*Hermitage:*

PE/HER OV3/1 Settlement Examinations  
OV3/2 Removals from Hermitage.  
OV3/3 Removals to Hermitage.

*Hilton:*

PE/HIL OV2/1 Removals from Hilton.  
OV2/2 Removals to Hilton.  
OV2/3 Settlement Examinations.

*Holwell:*

PE/HOW OV23 Removals from Holwell.  
OV24 Removals to Holwell.  
OV22 Settlement Examinations.

*Langton Herring:*

PE/LAH OV6 Settlement Papers.

*Lillington:*

PE/LIL OV2/1 Removals from Lillington.  
OV2/2 Removals to Lillington.



*Litton Cheyney:*

PE/LIC      OV6 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV7 Removals from Litton Cheyney.  
                 OV8 Removals to Litton Cheyney.

*Long Burton:*

PE/LOB      OV9 Removals from Long Burton.  
                 OV10 Removals to Long Burton.

*Long Crichel:*

PE/LOC      OV1 Removals from Long Crichel.

*Lydlinch:*

PE/LYD      OV3/2 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV3/3 Removals from Lydlinch.  
                 OV3/4 Removals to Lydlinch.

*Marshwood:*

PE/MAW      OV27 Removals from Marshwood.

*Melbury Bubb:*

PE/MBB      OV2/1 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV2/3 Removals from Melbury Bubb.

*Melbury Osmund:*

PE/MBO      OV12 Removals from Melbury Osmund.

*Milton Abbas:*

PE/MIL      OV4 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV5 Removals from Milton Abbas.  
                 OV6 Removals to Milton Abbas.

*Minterne Magna:*

PE/MIM      OV6 Removals from Minterne Magna  
                 OV7 Removals to Minterne Magna.  
                 OV8 Settlement Examinations.

*Mosterton:*

PE/MSN      OV3/2 Removals from Mosterton.  
                 OV3/3 Removals to Mosterton.  
                 OV3/4 Settlement Examinations.

*Motcombe:*

PE/MOT      OV4/1 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV4/3 Removals from Motcombe.  
                 OV4/4 Removals to Motcombe.

*Netherbury:*

PE/NBY      OV1 Settlement Papers.

*North Poorton:*

PE/NPO      OV3/1 Removals from North Poorton.  
                 OV3/2 Removals to North Poorton.  
                 OV3/3 Settlement Examinations.

*Pimperne:*

PE/PIM      OV2/2 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV2/3 Removals to Pimperne.  
                 OV2/4 Removals from Pimperne.

*Powerstock:*

PE/POW      OV5/1 Removals from Powerstock.  
                 OV5/2 Removals to Powerstock.  
                 OV5/4 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV5/5 Settlement Certificates.

*Poole:*

PE/PL        OV2/5 Removals to Poole.

*Sherborne:*

PE/SH        OV1/1 Settlement Certificates.  
                 OV1/3 Removals to Sherborne.  
                 OV1/4 Removals from Sherborne.

*Puddletown:*

PE/PUD      OV3/2 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV3/3 Removals from Puddletown.  
                 OV3/4 Removals to Puddletown.

*Shipton Gorge:*

PE/SHG      OV3/2 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV3/3 Removals from Shipton Gorge.  
                 OV3/4 Removals to Shipton Gorge.

*Sixpenny Handley:*

PE/SIX        OV2 Removals to Sixpenny Handley.

*Stoke Abbot:*

PE/STA        OV3/1 Settlement Certificates.  
                 OV3/2 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV3/3 Removals from Stoke Abbot.  
                 OV3/4 Removals to Stoke Abbot.

*Stour Provost:*

PE/SPV        OV21 Settlement Certificates.  
                 OV22 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV23 Removals from Stour Provost.  
                 OV24 Removals to Stour Provost.

*Sturminster Marshall:*

PE/SML        OV6 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV7 Removals from Sturminster Marshall.  
                 OV8 Removals to Sturminster Marshall.

*Sydling St Nicholas:*

PE/SSN        OV3/1 Settlement Certificates.  
                 OV3/2 Settlement Examinations.  
                 OV3/3 Removals from Sydling St Nicholas.  
                 OV3/4 Removals to Sydling St Nicholas.



*Turnworth:*

PE/TWH      OV2/1 Settlement Examinations.  
                  OV2/2 Removals to Turnworth.

*Tyneham:*

PE/TYN      OV1 Settlement Examinations.

*Walditch:*

PE/WAL      OV3 Removals from Walditch.

*West Lulworth:*

PE/WLV      OV2/1 Settlement Examinations.  
                  OV2/2 Removals to and from West Lulworth.

*West Orchard:*

PE/WOR      OV2/2 Settlement Examinations.  
                  OV2/3 Removals from West Orchard.  
                  OV2/4 Removals to West Orchard.

*Whitchurch Canonorum:*

PE/WCC      OV74 Settlement Examinations.  
                  OV75 Removals from Whitchurch Canonorum.  
                  OV76 Removals to Whitchurch Canonorum.

*Wimborne St Giles:*

PE/WSG      OV10 Removals from Wimborne St Giles.  
                  OV11 Removals to Wimborne St Giles.

*Wimborne Minster:*

PE/WM      OV9/1 Removals from Wimborne Minster.  
                  OV9/2 Removals to Wimborne Minster.  
                  OV9/3 Settlement Examinations.  
                  OV9/4 Settlement Certificates.

*Winterborne Kingstone:*

PE/WKN      OV3 Settlement Examinations.  
                  OV4 Removals from Winterborne Kingstone.  
                  OV5 Removals to Winterborne Kingstone.

*Wyke Regis:*

PE/WYK      OV4/2 Removals from Wyke Regis.  
                  OV5/3 Removals to Wyke Regis.

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